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THIS BOOK PRESENTED BY
Mrs. Charles Friesell

ALFRED P. LEE
235 S. FIFTEENTH ST.
PHILADELPHIA

April 19, 1932.

Dear Ned:

Under separate cover I am sending you a little book by Christopher Morley. Barring pp. 19-20, devoted to yourstruly, I think it well worth reading. You may even enjoy pp. 19-20, knowing the subject and his foibles.

You can read this book of a short evening, and I am anxious to have you let me know what you think of Morley and his writing style.

Hope to get my book out around October 1.

Sincerely,



Dr. H. E. Friesell,
Schenley Apts., Oakland Station,
Pittsburgh, Pa.

MDV.

— 11 —

EX LIBRIS CARISSIMIS

CHRISTOPHER MORLEY
ROSENBACH FELLOW IN BIBLIOGRAPHY

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UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA PRESS

PHILADELPHIA

1932

Copyright, 1932

CHRISTOPHER MORLEY

Printed in the United States of America

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LONDON

HUMPHREY MILFORD

OXFORD UNIVERSITY PRESS

To the unidentified

J. S. AND R. B.

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in honor of

the letters written by them

to the *Morning Chronicle* in October, 1818

In 1930 Doctor A. S. W. Rosenbach founded a Fellowship in Bibliography at the University of Pennsylvania. Mr. Christopher Morley was appointed the first fellow under this foundation. The present volume contains the five talks he delivered at the University in the Autumn of 1931.

Author's Note

THESE WERE NOT LECTURES but conversations.

They were uttered *viva voce* and (except for occasional quotations) without benefit of notes, though not without much previous meditation. They were taken down with drastic fidelity by a disconcertingly accurate stenographer. Their colloquial character is obvious, and it requires courage to print them in this form. But to rewrite them would be to change their quality entirely. I have corrected a few very gruesome infelicities but otherwise they stand as spoken.

Perhaps it is a salutary experience for a writer to learn by accurate report how disorderly his oral expression can be. Reading over the transcript of these talks I thought sadly of the name of a famous London surgeon whom I once found listed in *Who's Who*—Sir Crisp English. I began to wonder whether plain decent prose is a natural function of human beings. Perhaps not. Perhaps the amount of time some of us spend in trying to teach ourselves to write simply, is not wasted. But those who sat through those afternoons at the University will

remember there was only one avowed intention: to suggest, without ulterior pretension, a feeling about books which is frankly personal and unacademic.

The allusion in the dedication is explained in the course of the fifth talk.

CHRISTOPHER MORLEY

New York City

March 1932

Contents

	PAGE
I <i>BIBLIOGRAPHY AS A HOBBY</i>	I
Tom Folio—Dr. Rosenbach and Caliban—Sir John Harington—Bibliography pure and applied— <i>The Amenities</i> —Best bibliographers have had printing house experience—Hazards of the press—The <i>Bibliographia</i> Series—Sadleir and Chapman—Anglo-American variations—Lax conscience of edition dealers—Catalogitis—When authors find themselves collected	
II <i>THREE KINDS OF COLLECTORS</i>	21
A box of symbols—Communication—Intoxication—Penetration—Mystification—Purification—Spiritual genealogy of one's own copies—Walt Whitman—Alexander Smith—Dewey Decimal System—Two pebbles—George Gissing— <i>Ryecroft</i> —Not necessary to pay high prices—George Meredith as publisher's reader—Conrad's certificate as master—His visit to America—Cunninghame Graham's tribute	
III <i>ESCAPED INTO PRINT</i>	45
De Quincey also reproached—Story of Rilke's overcoat—Conrad as a foreigner—Heinemann and Pawling—Sir Sidney Colvin—Continuity between Stevenson and Conrad—Stevenson items—Captain David Bone—The first maritime bookshop— <i>Disenchantment</i> —Great books need our help	

IV *CARRIER PIGEONS*

PAGE

69

Thomas Fuller—Bibliography of the Bone family—Muirhead Bone's early drawings—C. E. Montague—A carrier pigeon—Some letters—Iffley Road in 1911—*The Lyric Year*—Vachel Lindsay—Vintage years in literature—1912—An unpardonable rudeness—Lindsay's *Rhymes for Bread*—His personality—Mr. Wanamaker and "The Star Spangled Banner"—Lindsay's passion for youth

V *WINE THAT WAS SPILT IN HASTE* 99

Robinson Crusoe's mistake—Mark Twain's hair—H. M. Tomlinson—His debt to Thoreau—Felix Riesenbergs—Spitzbergen beans—J. G. Cozzens—J. S. and R. B.—Frank Shay's bookshop—An autographed door—William Rose Benét—Rupert Brooke—Stephen Vincent Benét—S4N—T. S. Eliot—Catalogue of the Oxford University Press—Bartholomew's *Atlas*—Fancies of literature based on reality—University Presses—Petrarch's golden florins—*Sanctorius on Perspiration*—Arthur Upson

GOLDEN FLORINS

131

A Reading List of eighty-five books

Bibliography as a Hobby

ONCE CAME ACROSS AN early book about the navigation of the air, published in the eighteenth century, and was enchanted by a suggestion that the author made for the invention of airships. The idea was that people should go to the tops of high mountains, and there collect the fine, pure, light, rarefied air of the summits and put it into bags and seal up the bags and bring them down to the commonplace level of everyday. There, by attaching the upward lift of those bags to a raft, they could be used for an airship. That is precisely what lovers of great books try to find in the books they love—the lighter air of the mountain peaks of human life.

I am not a bibliographer, I am not even in any exact sense a bibliophile. To my embarrassment my eye has already fallen upon several real bibliophiles in this gathering. In any exact sense, I am not one of them. I am only, in my favorite phrase, a bibliophiladelphian; amateurish and exiled, but still a bibliophiladelphian. And to be honest, I have always had somewhat a suspicion of those who are over-sedulous about paper and ink and type and

margins. Like any man in his senses, I like well-made and workmanlike books, legible, portable, durable. But also, I sometimes feel inclined to echo that line of Tennyson's "In Memoriam,"

So careful of the type? but No!

Because what interests me is the actual impact of a book upon the mind, and anything in the nature of fantastic or frolic decoration, or excessive bulk, or slovenly editing, Persian ornament of any sort, interferes with the intrinsic purport of the work.

In number 158 of the famous *Tatler*, you will find a delicious ironic character-sketch written by Addison of a gentleman whom he describes as "a book collector and broker in learning, Tom Folio." And so that it may be textual in the record, I want to read you two or three lines from that essay. Addison ironically describes Tom Folio:—"He is a universal scholar, so far as the title page, of all authors. He has a greater esteem for Aldus and Elzevir than for Virgil and Horace. He thinks he gives you an account of an author when he tells you the subject he treats of, the name of the editor, and the year in which it was printed. Or, if you draw him into further particulars, he cries up the goodness of the paper, extols the diligence of the corrector, and is transported with the beauty of the letter. This he looks upon to be sound learning and substantial criticism." (You will not have

missed Addison's sly suggestion of a pun, Tom Folio and tomfoolery.)

I mention Tom Folio only because he is so different from the very astute and very distinguished book collector and book distributor who is the founder of the fellowship we inaugurate today. Surely there is no man living more familiar with luxuries of fine binding, of beautiful printing, and of desiderated editions than Dr. Rosenbach; but Dr. Rosenbach above all and before all is a scholar. Not in vain did he take his doctorate in letters here under your own and my own Dr. Schelling. Dr. Rosenbach is a scholar, and he knows that books are intended to be read and to bring their noble ecstasies and anxieties to the mind. And coming here with the particular humility which a mere amateur must feel in Philadelphia, a city famous for great collectors and men of literary learning, to soliloquize as your first Rosenbach Fellow, I can't help feeling much as Caliban must have felt toward Prospero. You will remember the two fuddled Italians on the island are comparing notes as to how they may have access to Prospero's secret sources of power and magic, and Caliban emits a significant line, which he reiterates several times: "First, be sure to possess his books." And we say to ourselves now, naïvely, that if only we had Dr. Rosenbach's books, perhaps some of the secrets of

his power and intuition would be ours. But I am afraid it is a matter more subtle than that.

I don't want to embarrass our founder by gratuitous allusion, but I would like to remind him that even as very small rodents have been serviceable to the greater carnivora, so I myself once did him literary service. In a novel by J. S. Fletcher, a detective story called *The Yorkshire Moorland Mystery*, the genial doctor was used as the victim of an assassin, and there in Mr. Fletcher's yarn you will find him foully done by, under another name but obviously the same personality. This amused Dr. Rosenbach very much, but I felt myself that matters could not remain so, and consequently, in a subsequent story of my own, the title of which, with a reticence rare in lecturers I will not mention, I brought him to life again. There you will find him in an old-fashioned fairy tale as the godfather of a beautiful baby entitled Incunabula. So as our first bit of home-work you might identify the story in which Dr. Rosenbach appears as the godfather of this nurseling, Incunabula.

Another bit of home-work occurs to me. I wish someone would look up for me the text of a passage that I have not had time to run down, an epigram written by that disreputable person, bless his heart, Sir John Harington. At Oxford, in 1592, after attending some classes, he wrote an epigram entitled "Of Learning Nothing at a Lecture." That sounded

appropriate, but I haven't had a chance to look it up.*

If you don't remember who Sir John Harington was, it is not the purpose of a decorous meeting like this to remind you, but he wrote a somewhat Rabelaisian pamphlet on plumbing which brought a royal flush to Gloriana's cheek, and caused him to be exiled from the court for some time. His essay was a most interesting forerunner of a modern humoresque known as *The Specialist*. Those of you who are Elizabethan scholars are probably familiar with Sir John Harington, and the others, I hope, will avoid him. There are, I think, only two copies of *The Metamorphosis of Ajax*, Sir John Harington's pamphlet to which I allude, in existence in this country. One is in the Huntington Library, the other in my desk drawer in New York in the office of the *Saturday Review*. Of course, it doesn't belong to me—it belongs to Dr. Rosenbach; but it is characteristic of him that when I expressed a desire to see this unspeakably rare and precious book, he handed it over just as though it had been an evening paper and said, "Keep it as long as you want." I have had it for over a year. And he has never even asked me, "Is it all right? Is it safe? Have you got it? Or what has happened to it?" That is characteristic of Dr.

* See *The Letters and Epigrams of Sir John Harington*, edited by Norman E. McClure. Philadelphia, University of Pennsylvania Press, 1930, p. 152.

Rosenbach's generosity with his treasures. Lest you think our mention of that book *infra dig.*, let me add that it was published by no less a person than Richard Field, Shakespeare's own boyhood friend, fellow townsman and first publisher.

That little parenthesis shows you how dangerous it is to soliloquize in so large a field of human interest. It is like driving a car from Long Island into New York over the miracle of the Queensboro Bridge, where as you look off from that, in a literal sense, despicable vantage, you see all the turrets and spires and terraced minarets of Manhattan shining in the afternoon dazzle, and in that oblique perspective falling into the most singular shapes of light and shadow. You are aware of all that on the outer rim of your eye, but you have to keep your car in line in the stream of traffic and you don't dare look aside. And in the same way, all the peaks and valleys and cañons of literature are on each side of us, but all that we can do in these talks is hang onto the steering wheel and try to steer a straight course down the little narrow track we have chosen for ourselves.

Of the technique of bibliography, as you know, I can give you nothing. Bibliography is an exact science, it has a notation of its own which is almost as intricate as algebra, and the scientific bibliographer requires for his work a technical apparatus almost as complicated as that of the famous detec-

tive, Dr. Thorndyke, in Austin Freeman's charming detective stories. I divide bibliography as we do mathematics, into pure and applied. And in the case of the scientific bibliographer, whose task is the accurate description and identification of books, there is even a dissecting-room phase of the subject. The conscientious collator, in order to be quite sure that a copy or an edition is what he thinks and hopes it may be, to prove or disprove his thesis he may even have to dismember the volume, to take the binding apart and examine it signature by signature—a perfect analogy for the medical operation which is a great clinical success, but the patient perishes.

Scientific and pure bibliography is not my field. Errors and blunders committed by the author or the printer or the binder, which mean woe to the reader, are meat and drink to the scientific bibliographer, they are his joy and his passion. For ourselves, I suggest that we limit our comments to what we may call amateurish or applied bibliography. We make use of the findings and intuitions of bibliography only in so far as they help us to understand and enjoy what the author may have had in mind, what he wants to bring to us. Of the technical severities of bibliography, you can learn admirably in such a little book as *The Elements of Book Collecting*, by Iolo A. Williams, a book that I esteem particularly for its outburst

against the naïvetés prevalent in the use of book-plates. Another book, a little more informal, is *A Primer of Book Collecting* by John T. Winterich, who gives an amusing case-history of the beginning of a collecting passion.

It is certainly unnecessary at a meeting like this to mention any of a series of famous books written by a member of this class, whom I see out of the corner of my eye,—books which have probably caused more suffering to writers than any other books ever published, because as soon as the first of them was published, at the end of the war, all the returning soldiers, when they came back from the A. E. F., immediately became autograph collectors, and have remained autograph collectors ever since. And the amount of additional correspondence thus decanted upon the world is painful to contemplate. Of course you will understand I speak there with the privileged jocularity of affection. One of my great prides is that I think I wrote the first review published in any magazine of that enchanting book, which was the A B C of a new era of collecting. I mean by A B C, *The Amenities of Book Collecting*. Mr. Newton, in his A B C, started a new age. The war ended in November, 1918, and I think also in November, 1918, his book was published, and has created thousands of collectors, and, I am sorry to say, thousands of people who write for signatures. Because before we pass

on to another phase, I would like to leave with you two hard sayings, the truth of which will become apparent as you brood over them. In the first place, that the really great first editions never knew they were first editions; and in the second place that the autographs most worth having are those that were never intended as such. Those are hard sayings, but brood over them; they may seem cruel but they are true.

Bibliography itself is a hobby for specialists, and the most cautious bibliographers are those who have had actual printing-house experience. I am not in particularly good standing with collectors because I am not interested in what they call "mint state," an unopened copy of a book, by which they mean a copy of a book whose pages have not been dissevered. An unopened copy of a book is to me a dead thing, or a thing that has never been born. I like a book to show signs of life and use. Literature, to me, is a form of companionship, and just as we do not love our friends any less because they may have a darn in their shirts or a crack in their shoes, or a crumple in their suits, similarly I like a book to show signs of life and usage, signs of reasonable wear, if not of tear. As I say, unopened copies over which many collectors go into ecstasies are to me something that has not yet been born. A book isn't born until someone reads it.

Also, a man who has had actual printing-house experience knows something (no one can know all) of the endless errors and hazards that obtain in the printing profession. He knows how printed sheets get lost, get mislaid, get shuffled about, how an authentic first press-run may not get bound up until long afterwards, in a case (that is, a binding) quite different from that of the first edition. He knows how stark error often intervenes to complicate the problem. In thinking about first editions you should not forget that first off the press does not mean first to the binder, because as the printed sheets accumulate, those on the top of the pile are those that came latest from the press; they are carried in that order to the folding machines and to the bindery.

Suppose a book happens to be selling well. Very often a second printing is ordered even before publication, while the first printing is still in train. When the second printing, and perhaps the third printing that succeeds it, are delivered to the bindery or to the stockroom, they are piled on top of the first edition, and as is perfectly obvious, in any orderly commercial practice, copies are delivered from the top of the pile. Deliveries are made to the bookstores from the top of the pile, and the first edition may get buried under succeeding printings and lie there, perdue, for months or years.

I do not want to be too explicit, but I think of a little book of my own for which booksellers in their catalogues, I observe, are charging a modest premium for the first edition. I happen to know that in the stockroom of the publisher, down at the bottom of the pile, underneath succeeding printings, there are several hundred copies of the first printing available, (oh, how available!) at their original price.

Those are things that one learns by the fascinating task of snooping around in a publisher's stockroom.

And as I say, stark error intervenes often to complicate the problem. I think of another small book of mine (and again to show my disinterested attitude, I don't mention its title, and I only venture to mention these things because they are matters that I know best, that I know absolutely, not just by hearsay). The book was selling quite well when it was first published, Christmas was approaching and the sales department became anxious as to whether there was enough stock on hand to go through the Christmas season. They sent down to the stockroom for a report, and the copies on hand were counted and, incredible as it may seem, there were 15,000 of them. But in an autumn season, stock clerks being human and fallible like the rest of us, the stock clerk's hand wavered, and he reported, instead of 15,000, that

there were 1500 copies on hand. The sales department was agitated. They were astounded to think that the whole edition could have gone so fast, and ordered 15,000 more, the result of which was that as Christmas approached, no less than 30,000 copies of that unfortunate book were piled up in the stockroom bins. Just about that time, a phenomenon happened that will continue to happen every now and then, and will continue to puzzle and irritate authors who can never think of any valid reason for it. The sale of that book stopped almost dead, and the publisher was left with 30,000 copies on his hands. Eventually, the drug stores and the United Cigar Company did their best to help. Mr. Liggett, that well-known collector, took care of generous consignments, but even so, there still are, and I with these eyes have seen them, as a result of that unfortunate error in decimals, in the publisher's stockroom, about 10,000 copies of that particular title. And when, this Christmas, about one hundred people buy that book, as about one hundred people do every Christmas time, they will be a little puzzled to observe that the copies they buy are dated 1927. They will immediately say to the bookseller, "Oh, but this isn't a new book, this is an old book." And the bookseller, who knows that very well, will be hard put to it to explain. That is an episode that did not happen to concern a first edition, because the first edition

of that book was indicated as such; but it might very well have happened to a first edition.

Can you conceive of anything more comic than the appeal which goes out to the public every now and then to be sure to buy a first edition (I will not mention titles or authors) of such and such and so and so, where we know that first edition is anything from 10,000 to 50,000 copies? In other words, to come back to our dictum, the first edition that knows it is a first edition is of only relative value.

If any of you are really interested in bibliography, you will of course familiarize yourself with the famous *Bibliographia* Series, the subtitle of which is *Studies in Book History and Structure*, published in London by the famous firm of Constable. That able series of treatises is presided over by Michael Sadleir, whom I regard as the most fortunate of all bibliographers, because some years ago he got out a book which has become standard in its field, a bibliography of Trollope. With manly brevity, this book was entitled simply *Trollope*. A great many people bought it, thinking it must be a novel about a woman of the streets; when they found it was a very serious and scientific treatise on bibliography, they were naturally disappointed. It reminds me of an ingenious bookseller friend of mine. At a time when the Episcopal Church of New York was subject to recurrent undulations of

scandal, this bookseller was canny enough to put in his window a copy of George Eliot's book, *Scenes of Clerical Life*, and everyone who had been reading the newspapers immediately leaped to the conclusion that this had to do with certain well-known parsons, and as many copies of *Scenes of Clerical Life* as the Oxford Press could supply were sold almost at once. There again the readers were strongly disappointed.

But Mr. Sadleir, as I say, was a very fortunate bibliographer, because generally speaking, books of that sort are bought only by those who have our subject as a special hobby. But perhaps the ideal of modern bibliographers is Mr. R. W. Chapman, of the Oxford Press. And if you want to see the high tide and full pulse of the bibliophile's blood at its most winning, procure yourself a copy of Mr. Chapman's little book, published in 1920, called — *The Portrait of a Scholar*. That little book was written almost entirely in the mud and desolation of war-time dugouts in Macedonia, and yet it has a fullness of spirit, a tranquillity and richness of mind that few of us could attain even in the calmest secluded sanctum. It seems to be a habit of Mr. Chapman's to seek out curious places to write his books. I once had a letter from him from the Caledonian Hotel in Edinburgh, whither he had retired to finish his index of the works of Jane Austen. And I recall that letter for one particular

point which may seem irrelevant at first. The letter was dated 12/9/26, and according to customary American chronology, that would mean the letter was written on December 9, 1926. But English usage in that matter is definite and logical—first the day, then the month, then the year. When Mr. Chapman dated his letter 12/9/26, that meant the twelfth day of the ninth month of 1926. And I only mention that minute point because so often I have seen American cataloguers and bibliographers go wrong on just that point because they don't realize that English usage in that recording of dates is different from ours. One of the first specialties of an accomplished bibliographer must be to study the fascinating and delightful divergences in Anglo-American usages. I always am thrilled when I go into an English telephone booth and see the charming eighteenth-century flavor of their instructions to people who want to telephone. In the first place, instead of just saying, "Phone," they say, "You may telephone from here." In their little list of instructions, where we would speak of "getting your party," they would say, "When you hear your correspondent." And then they have a little sign that says, "The telephonist will instruct you when to insert your pennies." And in many similar ways, there are delightful differences between English usage and our own, which for a bibliographer in our language are of highest im-

portance. When, for example, Mr. A. P. Herbert in one of his novels, that delightful detective story, *The House by the River*, speaks of one of his characters, who, he says, "was so insignificant that his death would only be recorded on the front pages of the newspapers," it requires a knowledge of the make-up of English journalism to understand what he means.

One could go on almost indefinitely with examples of those variations. I was highly amused last year when I was on a ship that was going into Plymouth Harbor. There was a delightful Philadelphia girl to whom much attention had been paid by a very handsome young Englishman during the voyage. It was her first view of Britain, and as the good old *Caronia* came into Plymouth Harbor, the Englishman was explaining to her all the beauty spots roundabout—the bowling green where Drake played bowls, and Plymouth Hoe, and all the rest of it. And I was standing by, not deliberately eavesdropping, but just adjacent, and I heard him say, as he looked around the landscape, "Isn't it queer to see all this beautiful country, and those gasómers?" And she said, "What?" or words to that effect—she made it plain she hadn't quite understood what he said. And he said, "This lovely country, and over there among those trees and so on, those gasómers." And I saw her eye wildly swivel in my direction; she thought that

I probably would know what this chap was speaking about, and I said, "Gas tanks." They were just the big ordinary gas tank of commerce, which in England are known as gasometers, but she was utterly baffled by the word. She thought a gasometer might be some particular rich kind of sepulchral ruin; and similarly, you have to be on your guard in regard to these differences.

I once found an English friend poring in some perplexity over a Long Island Railway timetable, which explained that at certain times of the year the Long Island trains were run on daylight-saving time, but, said the General Passenger Agent, "During the balance of the year, the trains will run on Eastern Standard Time." My English friend looked at this again and again and he said, "What do they mean by 'the balance of the year'? Do they mean the equinoxes?" In England, our use of the word "balance" as meaning "remainder," is unknown. To them, balance is just something that equilibrates.

If you should undertake bibliography as a hobby, remember that it is not a bed of roses, but a field of battle. I suppose there is no topic in which there is such violent difference of opinion, such delicious dissension, and such a mountainous specialized literature as in this matter of the codification of rare books. In the first place, collectors are sentimental and (in the Shakespearean sense) humorous; other-

wise they wouldn't be collectors. In the second place, the will to believe is naturally very strong in respect of our own cherished copy. And in the third place, many booksellers have a habit of assuming, on very insufficient scrutiny, that such and such a point is of edition or issue significance. They stick it into their catalogues on very insufficient scrutiny of the problem, and once a point gets into a catalogue, it is copied by other booksellers, it goes from one to the next, the ball is set rolling, and it is very hard to stop it. The most scrupulous and distinguished booksellers are surprisingly lax in the matter of scientific verification of points. It is only natural that they should be. If we were to ask the president of the American Radiator Company, for example, to write us an essay on the joys of being warm, we might expect him to show a surprising enthusiasm for the career of a calory; and similarly, humanity being what it is, the average bookseller is not always severely conscientious in looking up the matter of whether a certain insert of advertisements really indicates an issue or an edition.

I spoke of the credulity of collectors. I think, to be specific, I might just quote you what Eugene Field said on that matter. In Eugene Field's delightful old book, *The Love Affairs of a Bibliomaniac*, he speaks of the famous disease of all collectors, catalogitis. "Every human being," says

Field, "has two sets of bowels, physical and intellectual. The brain is the intellectual bowel. Catalogitis is a stoppage in the fanlike structure of the fourth layer of the brain, so that ideas are no longer cooled, and the continuity of thought is interrupted. It is caused by a germ which grows in the cheap paper used by booksellers for catalogue purposes."

I catch the eye, as we near the end of the hour, of an old friend of mine who is actually a bibliographer and has indeed, in the intervals of a very busy and useful career as a dental surgeon, recuperated himself with compiling a bibliography for the subject of which he has unfortunately chosen a living writer who is still, I won't say prolific, but at any rate moderately productive. That involves, as you may imagine, embarrassments, because while a bibliographer presumably esteems the work of the writer whom he has chosen as his subject, at the same time he has a natural appetite of a specialist for seeing his bibliography complete. It causes a good deal of heart-burning in the breast of an author who finds himself the subject of a bibliography when he reflects that every time he sits down to write anything, he is making the task of his bibliographer more difficult.

I remember one time when Dr. Lee (I don't scruple to name him)—when Dr. Alfred Lee, of

this city, came out to my home in the country, bringing with him what I can unhesitatingly say was the heaviest portmanteau I have ever seen or helped to carry. It contained a card index of the fruit of years of amusement on his part in which he had laboriously catalogued all the works, even down to casuals of the press and random ejaculations of journalism, of his chosen subject. And I mention that matter because coming over in the train today, I was thinking of Dr. Lee's problem and of my own, his desire to make a bibliography complete, mine to go on and write some books worth writing—an absolute impasse, as you see. I was thinking that just as when Goldsmith's lovely lady stooped and was conquered there was only one solution for her, similarly, for an author in that position, there is I fear only one course. And coming over on the train, in Dr. Lee's honor, and in honor of our class here, I committed the following:

When authors find themselves collected
And learn, alas, that men collate
Their works for errors unsuspected
Or copies in a pristine state,
To put the gilt upon the cover
Complete the catalogue raisonné
And please the bibliographic lover,
What can they do? Just pass away.

Three Kinds of Collectors

IN THE ANGLICAN PRAYER-book there is a magnificent passage which, by just transposing the accent, leaps to the eye of the booklover. You find it written there that "The first collect for the day, the second collect for peace, the third collect for grace to live well." Of that triple division of collectors, I hope the third may be our classification. Those who collect for the day may perhaps be collecting to sell again tomorrow. In the case of those who collect for peace, possibly one element of their pacification is the unworthy feeling that they have the best existing copy. I hope that we are of those who collect for grace.

I say to myself that one does not orate to his friends; he talks with them. And you must excuse certain informalities in these talks for the sincerity which I believe lies behind them.

I had never thought of myself as a collector until quite recently. These unsought confessions have particular poignance for me at this time because now, for the first time in ten years, I am spending the winter in an apartment in the city,

divided from the books I know and love best except for a dozen or so which I had to choose as *ultima ratio*. And therefore, looking back around those shelves of mine from which I am momentarily separated, and trying to think which of those well-loved books I might mention to you, I realized for the first time that perhaps I am more of a magpie, more of a collector, than I had supposed. Going over those shelves before leaving them for the winter, I came upon a little cardboard box, the contents of which provide me with the symbolism I need for these talks. In that cardboard box for a number of years it seems I had been putting away casual trivialities which seemed to me too precious to destroy, and yet to an alien eye would have no meaning whatever. In that box I found a great many old theatre-ticket stubs of various colors, I found buttons, and broken buckles from wrist-watch straps, I found a piece of copper wire, a piece of stained glass, a silver-mounted cork from a little set of four phials one of which got broken, I found an Indian arrowhead and many other trivialities that I won't weary you with. But I realized, as I looked over those casual oddments, that some instinct deeper than myself had caused me to put them away. Every one of those queer items might be the theme of a story. Put together, they would compile a perhaps too embarrassing autobiography, and looking over them in some-

what the mood of an executor for several dead selves, I realized that I could take five or six of them and use them as what Stevenson calls moral emblems, symbols of various moods which impel us to treasure great books.

The first of these items that I symbolized in my mind was a piece of copper wire. The full story of that piece of copper wire would be too long to tell. Briefly, it came from an old telephone booth, now dismantled, out at Haverford College, a telephone booth which during many undergraduate generations served as the only outlet of romance for a dormitory of young men. For many years the inhabitants of that dormitory did all their telephoning to Bryn Mawr over that one piece of copper wire, a portion of which I rescued when the booth was torn down last year. And as you may imagine, that copper wire, now somewhat tarnished, seems to show in its faded color signs of atomic fatigue. When I think what naïve and youthful electricities must have traversed that shining thread I am moved with a sentimental recollection and I say to myself that that wire can charmingly symbolize the function of literature as communication.

The second item that I choose from this motley little collection is the silver-mounted cork from a set of glass phials. That little series of test-tubes was given to me years ago by a book collector, for purposes that I will not insist upon, but at any

rate I say to myself that that little cork can represent in literature or in art the great function of intoxication or ecstasy. Similarly, it might represent the narcotic or sedative functions of literature which are also important.

The third remainder in this cardboard box is a quartz Indian arrowhead which I picked up on the front lawn of a Long Island home during a spell of exceptionally hot weather a few years ago, when on account of the drought the roots of the grass lay bare and the suburban gardener tended his turf more carefully than ever before. One evening, mowing and watering, he found this white, razor-sharp quartz arrowhead which had lain there, I suppose, since the red men of Paumanok were pushed out by the first Dutch commuters. And that reminded me that literature is also sometimes a sharp and penetrating missile. I think of that arrowhead to symbolize such literature as, to take on the grand scale, a man like Voltaire, or to take on a smaller but equally sharp-edged scale, a Philadelphian brother of our own, Logan Pearsall Smith, in his *Trivia*.

The fourth curiosity in this collection was a piece of fourteenth-century stained glass from Chartres Cathedral, given me by the curator of that cathedral himself some years ago, a piece of that irreproducible fourteenth-century blue, which many of us have seen in the west window of that famous

building. This was one of the pieces of the old original glass which was broken when those noble windows were taken down and buried underground for safekeeping during the war. As I look at that little fragment of glass, which is dull and opaque until you hold it up against the sky, I wonder sometimes what Chartres Cathedral must look like at night when there is a full moon. M. Battais, the guardian of the Cathedral, sleeps there alone at night with a dog as his sole companion, and he has told me how, on a milky moonlit night, he seems to see down those aisles the ghosts of old French history waver and move and come out from behind the pillars and disappear again, and often and often the dog who sleeps with him has got up from the floor and bristled and snarled and shown signs of doggish anxiety. And that bit of stained glass from Chartres which I treasure suggests to me literature's power as a form of translucence; if we remember our Shelley, we are bound to think of it as symbolizing the full white light of being that comes to us through the colored panes of human emotion and human trouble.

The last of those oddities is one so humble, so commonplace, that I am almost afraid to mention it. But I found it in this box and must have preserved it with some subconscious intention. It was one of those very small corkscrews that accompany the bottles of a well-known brand of disinfectant.

And that suggested to me literature's antiseptic, antitoxic importance, literature as purification.

Now, of course that group of symbols is haphazard and fanciful. I was about to say "merely" fanciful, but after all, what is the function and meaning of letters if not, as Keats said, to let the fancy roam? Obviously, that schedule of very humble symbols is not complete nor exhaustive, but I think you will find that most of the literature that has meant much to us can be classified under one of those divisions: as communication, as intoxication, as penetration, as mystification, or as purification.

You may have divined at the first talk that my interest in bibliography is chiefly in its human overtones. There are certain books which effuse, as Walt Whitman liked to say, which effuse eidolons, human vibrations, and trying to decide which of those books I might mention in these brief talks, I was staggered to observe what deeply interlacing roots of association they all had for me. Perhaps one would only realize that to the full when going away to leave his familiar shelves for some months. I remember reading once that the phrase "sowing wild oats" derived its uncomfortable significance for this reason, that the wild oat, an unimpressive plant itself, has tough tendrils that run underground thirty feet horizontally and can never be entirely eradicated. Those books that I loved are

in a sense my wild oats. There is not one of them that does not ejaculate whole nervous systems of human relationship. When we hear collectors speak of "association copies" they always mean books that have had some peculiarly complex relation with the author, but let us not forget that we readers have our own associations which are probably more important to us than the distant associations of the author. At any rate, our associations are our own, and no one can dictate them to us. Therefore I suggest we think for a few moments about our own association copies. I suggest, as employment for a pensive or a vacant mood, that we trace the spiritual genealogy of the books that we ourselves have loved most, that we retrace their history in our own lives. When did we first hear of them, when did we first read them or own them? By what strangely delayed and twisted approaches have we come upon the books that mean most to us?

I can't forget, for example, that it was in a little Russian bookshop on the East Side of New York City that I came upon one of the greatest of American testimonies, Walt Whitman's *Prose*. Neither schools nor colleges nor the more fashionable bookstores of the western avenues had ever brought it home to my business and bosom that Walt Whitman had written a volume of prose,

certainly as important as his poetry, a book that we neglect at our intellectual peril.

I was amused to notice when I was in Philadelphia one day last spring, that the old familiar arguments against Walt Whitman are still doing service. Some robust Philadelphian wrote a letter in the *Public Ledger* protesting against Walt Whitman's having at length been admitted to the Hall of Fame. I admit that being put in the Hall of Fame does not solve any of the perplexing problems that Walt Whitman presents both for the critic and for the citizen, but at any rate it seems to me a step in the right direction. But not so to the correspondent of the *Ledger*. He says, "Residents of this city remember Whitman simply as a picturesque, lovable loafer, who used to be seen on Market Street frequently with a market basket on his arm and sans necktie. He was a poseur, as his life story will show, shirked his responsibility wherever possible, and the only thing that was commendable in his entire career was his work as a nurse during the Civil War." Naturally Philadelphia, the great textile city, did not like the idea of Walt going without a necktie; and similarly Walt's very generous hosts out in Germantown deplored, as one of them has told me, Walt's habit of going into the bathroom after breakfast and staying there a long time to sing. It is true that Walt made bathroom topics lyrical, but that is

something which is not readily forgiven by those who are waiting to get in.

I am tracing the spiritual genealogy of certain books that have meant much to me. It was in this Russian bookshop on the East Side that I learned about Walt Whitman's *Prose*. It was from a country bookseller in the provinces of England that I first heard of that sweetest and most sedative of books, *Dreamthorp*, by Alexander Smith. This old bookseller, whom I described somewhat in detail in an essay a number of years ago, introduced me to Thomas B. Mosher's book catalogues from Portland, Maine, and it was in one of Mosher's catalogues that I first heard of *Dreamthorp*, a book which is not widely known, and yet I feel that a casual soliloquy like this would justify itself if it did nothing more than introduce a dozen new zealots to a book like *Dreamthorp*. Some of you may perhaps be interested in writing essays. Alexander Smith's sketch in that book, called "On the Writing of Essays," is the wisest and most communicative thing ever said on that subject. His essay on Christmas, Christmas of the year 1862, is one of the loveliest things ever written about Christmas, one of the most poignant, and this is the time of year to re-read it. It was written not long before his death; perhaps already, in his fine phrase, he had "the candle of death in his hand," that casts such a softened light on human scenes.

Alexander Smith was born in Kilmarnock, in Scotland, a town whose name is familiar enough in the ears of booklovers because it was there, as you remember, that Robert Burns' poems were first published. Another Philadelphia footnote—Burns, you know, had already taken passage for Philadelphia when he got word from Kilmarnock that his poems were to be published. And, weighing Philadelphia as against the pleasures of having a book of poems published, he canceled his sailing, but came within a few hours of being a Philadelphia poet instead of a Scottish poet. I think the loss was rather one-sided.

Alexander Smith, as I say, was born in Kilmarnock about a hundred years ago, where his father was a designer of patterns for those beautiful Paisley shawls. I hope it is not too fanciful to imagine that one sees something of the same rich weave and delicate texture in the son's writing. Alexander Smith was one of the first of those moderns who have made the grim city of Glasgow famous in the arts, but he seceded from Glasgow and went over to her more beautiful rival, the extraordinarily lovely town of Edinburgh, which your own Tait McKenzie has helped to make more beautiful still with his wonderful Scottish-American War Memorial. Alexander Smith became the Secretary of Edinburgh University as a young man. I think we may take it for granted that the lives of university

executives are difficult and harassed. At any rate, we are told that he died of overwork and anxiety when he was just past the age of thirty-six. But his book still lives among a few occasional readers.

It is another Philadelphia footnote to remark that it was fifteen years after I first heard of that book before I actually saw it, when a generous Philadelphia collector, Mr. John C. Eckel, the well-known Dickens bibliographer, gave me a copy of the first edition.

Dr. Johnson, you remember, used to pray to be delivered from vacillation and vagrancy of mind. I reiterate that prayer, but I am somewhat encouraged to remember that when I visited a library school in Wisconsin, some months ago, I first heard about the Dewey Decimal System, which is the great intellectual crutch of the librarian profession. The Dewey Decimals are those mysterious digits you find on library cards, by which all kinds of literature are pigeon-holed and classified. And in a moment of morbid curiosity, at the Wisconsin Library School, I asked what was my classification number in the Dewey Decimal System, and they told me it was 818.5. I didn't know whether to be cheered up or depressed. I didn't know whether that was supposed to be reckoned on a scale of 1,000 being perfect, or just what it meant, so I inquired, and they said, "818.5 means American Miscellaneous." And of course the tragedy is that

once you have been classified in that Dewey Decimal System, you have to stay in that classification forever, because naturally you can't ask the Library of Congress to reprint all those cards and the librarians all over the country to shift their classifications. If you are once rated "American Miscellaneous," so you remain. I do feel at any rate that it gives one a sort of roving commission that atones for some apparent irrelevancy.

In that box where those five symbolic relics were, there were two other small objects that I haven't mentioned. One was a pebble from the bottom of the Atlantic Ocean; the other was a pebble from the bottom of a very small suburban pond. When my friend Captain David Bone, the master of the Anchor Liner *Transylvania*, is coming westward and gets on soundings somewhere near the Newfoundland Banks, he puts down his lead line to see what the bottom is like. At the base of that lead, as any of you who are seafaring men will know, is a cup of tallow, and that tallow brings up from the bottom bits of sand and shells or weed or small brown pebbles by which the sailor can calculate just about where he is. That is a region where the weather is usually thick, and you are more likely to know where you are by soundings than by taking the height of the sun. Captain Bone had been collecting the best of those pebbles picked up on his many voyages, to make a deep-

sea necklace for his daughter, and he was kind enough to give me one of those small fragments from the bottom of the ocean as a souvenir of a voyage made with him. It amused me to put beside that pebble another little fragment of white stone that I had found at the bottom of what I call Gissing Pond, a very small suburban pool out in Long Island, but which a certain partly human and partly canine character once mistook for the ocean itself. If you put those two pebbles side by side, certainly the more impressive of the two is the pebble from the bottom of Gissing Pond. It is white and shiny, it is a little bit larger than the Atlantic Ocean pebble, and if you asked the average person which was the more important pebble, he would pick the one from shallow water. Is it not often just like that in our literary soundings? We cannot tell in our reveries about books whether the pebbles we are going to bring up may be from the bottom of a deep ocean or whether they may be only from a shallow suburban mere. Perhaps in some ways one is as important as the other. Do not forget that it is from hearsay of a small coral island that Shakespeare edified his magnificent fantasy of *The Tempest*.

Having mentioned Gissing Pond it is only fair to explain that a little further. I realized very well when I wrote a book using George Gissing's name for a character of somewhat enigmatic nature, that

it was an indefensible thing to do, but that character would accept no other name. I have often thought apologetically about this because I know that a good many readers have supposed that there might be some subtle satire intended. There was none. I had always been a great lover of George Gissing's books, and it so happened that on the very day when one of Gissing's books, *By the Ionian Sea*, came to me, our furnace man brought up from the village a small puppy in his pocket. The dog was named "Gissing." He was a dog with somewhat theological overtones, and he suggested a kind of fairy tale which was begun for the amusement of some children, but which changed itself into something rather different. But having been begun with that name, there seemed nothing else to be done about it. I admit that is not an important matter, but I feel it is an apology or explanation that should be made.

I first heard of George Gissing, also, in one of Mr. Mosher's book catalogues from Portland, Maine. I remember very well the look of dismay that went around the editorial council of a large publishing house about sixteen years ago when I suggested that to put some of Gissing's novels back in print might be a worthy enterprise. It is quite true that it would probably have been a failing venture, but it is remarkable to see what a revival

of interest in Gissing's somber talent there has been in the last fifteen or twenty years.

One of the modern first editions which I think is most to be coveted is the 1903 first edition of Gissing's enchanting and enchanted book, *The Private Papers of Henry Ryecroft*. If there are among you any thrice fortunate people who have not yet read *The Private Papers of Henry Ryecroft*, one of the best-loved of books among bibliophilic amateurs, I can't tell you how much I envy you. Only the other day, one of those strange things happened that renew one's faith in the magnificence of chance. I was in a small Italian restaurant down near Washington Square, in New York. I don't like it to go into the record, but it was an illegitimate kind of restaurant, and in that part of that kind of restaurant where people stand in a row and where sometimes conversation unexpectedly becomes bright and lambent and candid among people who hadn't known each other before, there was a lady who was, as the phrase is, "telling the world" about a book that had meant a very great deal in her life. She had forgotten the title of the book and the name of the author, but she was very eloquent on the subject of this book, which had evidently had a great influence on her. And suddenly another man and I, who overheard her, couldn't help breaking into the conversation and saying, "I know what that book is," and we told

her the title. She cried out in an ecstasy: "Ryecroft! That's it! How I could have loved that man!"

Well, those are the happy things that do occasionally occur. I must not identify her, but she proved to be a person of importance, and I couldn't help thinking to myself, when she said, "How I could have loved that man," how Gissing, poor Gissing, needed it. He had magnificent powers, but those who have read his novels attentively have noticed that he never shows that extraordinary liberation of energies which is released when there are happy and understanding relations between the two halves of humanity—I won't be so ungallant as to say the two halves, I will say the two divisions. One reason why *Ryecroft* is so fascinating a book is that it was written at the end of his life when, after years of bitter struggle and disappointment, happier conditions made it possible for some of his natural sweetness to show through.

Gissing is one of the few authors for whom I have ever deliberately gone to the dealers in rarity and bought first editions. I actually paid \$15.00 for my first edition in three volumes of *The Odd Women*, one of the novels of his prime. As a footnote I might say for the confusion of wealthier collectors that I have very rarely paid more than that for any book, and the books which are most precious

to me have usually cost me very little. One of my marginalia on this course is the suggestion that we should bear in mind that it is often advisable to collect the contents of books rather than their bibliographic quiddities.

I think, as I say, it is only once or twice that I have paid more than \$15.00 for any book. I did pay \$25.00 for my *Religio Medici* (of course not a first edition, but the fifth, which I believe was the first to contain Sir Kenelm Digby's lively *Observations*). I paid only \$15.00 for my first edition of Hobbes' *Leviathan*, one of the greatest books of the seventeenth century. It is a genuine, perfect first, with the exception that the binding has been repaired. I paid as much as \$22.50 for my first edition of Thomas Fuller's *The Holy State and the Profane State*, an absolutely faultless unmodified copy of 1642. Those two books, the *Leviathan* and the Fuller, are two of the masterpieces of the seventeenth century which have not been made fashionable by the collecting moguls. If they had been taken up by modern fuglemen, you would have to pay twenty or perhaps fifty times as much. Those two books can be got at somewhere near the prices I have mentioned or even lower from any really intelligent seventeenth-century bookseller. (I mean a bookseller who specializes in the seventeenth century.)

I don't like to see the whole profession, the

whole group of collectors, going in lockstep down the road that has been blasted for them by some distinguished amateur, and it is saddening to me sometimes to see how few collectors there are who try to blaze a trail along their own tastes and intuitions. If, for example, you should find yourself interested in Hobbes' *Leviathan*, look up John Aubrey, the seventeenth-century compiler of biographical memoranda, who wrote the most enchanting comments on Thomas Hobbes' person, his life and his qualities. I do think that *Leviathan* is one of the dozen or so greatest books in the English language. It isn't very often that anybody mentions it, and if you do happen to mention it in casual conversation, people will usually think you are speaking about a steamship.

I don't want to go away from the topic of Gissing's work too fast, because I like to imagine that in my interest in him there may even have been some hereditary influence at work. My grandfather was at one time one of the directors of the London publishing house of Chapman and Hall, Dickens's publishers—a fellow director of his, incidentally, was Anthony Trollope. I never could find out that either my grandfather or Anthony Trollope really did much hard work in connection with that publishing house, but it always pleased me very much to remember that in a scrapbook kept by my grandfather, there is a letter to him from the reader of

the publishing house, whose name was George Meredith. There is a note in my grandfather's scrapbook from George Meredith, asking him to read very carefully the manuscript of a novel by a young novelist in whom Meredith discerned much promise. The name of that young novelist was Thomas Hardy. Meredith, in his career as a publisher's reader, turned down a number of books that afterward became famous. *Erewhon* was one, *The Heavenly Twins* was another, and some novels by Ouida; even an early novel, I am pleased to remember, by Bernard Shaw, was turned down by him. And if you have ever tried to read any of Bernard Shaw's novels, you will sympathize with Meredith.

Incidentally, in a very enchanting book called *A Hundred Years of Publishing*, by Arthur Waugh, you will find a most entertaining description of George Meredith as Chapman and Hall's reader. He always wore lavender gloves to read manuscripts. He usually wore a gray checked suit, very neat and beautifully cut. His crisp gray hair, his lavender gloves, his gray suit, and always his bright scarlet tie, were said to make a very profound impression upon the lady authors of his publishing house, who would rather, they said, be turned down by George Meredith than be accepted by any other publisher. And one of my own perverse reasons for pride is that a novel written by

an uncle of mine was turned down by George Meredith.

But although he turned down many admirable things, two authors, in fact three authors to whom he gave their first substantial encouragement, were three so diverse writers as Thomas Hardy, G. A. Henty, and George Gissing. And I like to think just for personal sentimentality, that since Meredith and my grandfather corresponded on these topics, that my grandfather may actually have read some of Gissing in manuscript.

If you are curious about Gissing, you can read a great deal between the lines in a remarkable pseudo-biography (how accurate, I don't know) written by Morley Roberts, *The Private Papers of Henry Maitland*, published in 1912, and curiously anticipating later fashions in apocryphal or fictional biography. I suppose the most intimate association-copy that could be found of one of Gissing's books would be the *Ryecroft* that Gissing gave Roberts at St. Jean de Luz, in the Pyrenees, just before his death. It has always interested me to remember that that identical copy is, I believe, adrift somewhere here in this country. Morley Roberts wrote an interesting article a few years ago in a library journal in Scotland, telling how all his presentation copies from Gissing were with him years ago in this country, and he foolishly lent them to friends, and most of them disappeared.

He has never been able to trace them. And if any of you should ever, at any time, come across a copy of *The Private Papers of Henry Ryecroft* written by George Gissing and inscribed by him for Morley Roberts, I hope you will let me know so we can get in touch with the man to whom it really belongs.

I am going to omit for the moment several paragraphs that there isn't time to cover today, because I want, on account of a coincidence of date, to mention one topic in closing this member of our series. Remember that I am going along one or two of my own best-loved shelves, and, heaven forbid, not lecturing, but just trying to tell you with as much candor as is available in so large a classroom, about the things that mean most to me.

It happens that today* is forty-five years from the date on which Joseph Conrad was granted his certificate as master mariner. On November 11, 1886, the Commissioners of Admiralty gave to Conrad Korzeniowski his certificate of competence as master. To my way of thinking, there is no more covetable souvenir of modern literature than that. It now belongs to Mr. George Keating, a collector in New York, and you will find a facsimile of that interesting piece of paper in Keating's book *A Conrad Memorial Library*.

The two most personal of my literary enthusi-

* November 11, 1931.

asms as boy and young man were Robert Louis Stevenson and Joseph Conrad. I want to say something about Stevenson later, and the curious continuity that exists, in my own mind at any rate, between Stevenson and Conrad. But the fictional passion of my heart, the last fifteen or twenty years, has been my love of Conrad, and it pleases me to remember that I have, signed in his own hand, a copy of his book which was dearest to himself, *The Mirror of the Sea*.

Although Conrad had voyaged practically everywhere else, it was not until 1923, only a year before his death, that he crossed the western ocean. He came as a passenger in Captain Bone's ship, the *Tuscania*, and his fellow passenger on that voyage was the Captain's brother Muirhead Bone, the great artist. The finest portrait that has ever been done of Conrad was the etching Muirhead Bone did on shipboard when The Old Ulysses, as he called him, sat up in his red dressing gown in the cabin through all hours of the night and talked about his adventures over the seven seas. That marvelous etching by Bone shows the old mandarin outlines of that noble head and that curiously tilted Slavic face.

When Conrad arrived in New York in Captain Bone's ship, Captain Bone did as shipmasters should do, he made out what they call an inward manifest, that is, a statement of his most valuable

cargo, and in a copy of *The Mirror of the Sea*, which I happened to have in my pocket when I went down to meet the ship, Captain Bone wrote, "Duly delivered in the port of New York, in good condition, Captain Joseph Conrad—Signed, David W. Bone, Master." Conrad saw him doing this, and although I would not have asked him for an inscription, he was kind enough to witness it himself. The first essay in that enchanting book *The Mirror of the Sea* is called, you remember, "Landfalls and Departures." The sailor's landfall, you know, is his first sight of land after a voyage, when he falls in with the land, and Muirhead Bone in that same copy of the book put in a very beautiful little water-color painting of the Fire Island Lightship, which was Conrad's first landfall in North America.

Conrad's career raises the profoundest problems of consciousness and of literary art, and the problem as to whether he was spiritually a Pole, a Frenchman, or an Englishman. Some of the problems raised by his work we can't dispatch in a moment, and certainly one would not speak just casually of one of the great spirits of our time, but I would like to remind you, since it is the anniversary of the day on which his mastery of ships and the sea was officially authenticated, of a few words that I myself have rarely been able to read without a moistening of the eye. They were writ-

ten by Cunninghame Graham just after Conrad's death, and please note the marvelously touching art with which, in this little brief tribute, Cunninghame Graham introduces into this obituary of a great sailor, technical sea terms:

“The rain had cleared and the sun poured down upon us as in procession we bore the coffin to the grave. The semi-circle of Scotch firs formed, as it were, a little harbor for him. The breeze blew freshly, sou'west by south, a little westerly. A good wind, as I thought, to steer up channel by, and one that he who would no longer feel it on his cheek, looking aloft to see that the sails were drawing properly, must have been glad to carry when he struck soundings, passing the Wolf Rock after foul weather in the bay. Handsomely, as he who lay in it might well have said, they lowered the coffin down. The priest had left his Latin and said a prayer or two in English, and I was glad of it, for English surely was the speech the master mariner most loved, and honored in the loving with new graces of his own. All was well chosen for his resting place, and so we left him with his sails all duly furled, ropes flemished down, and with the anchor holding truly in the kind Kentish earth until the judgment day. The gulls will bring him tidings as they fly past above his grave.”

Escaped into Print

YOUR OWN DR. SCHELLING in one of his volumes of Shakespearean studies, reminds us of a fine phrase from the old Stationer's Register. That register, as you know, was the official place of record for literary property. When a play was produced in the sixteenth century, it belonged to the author only until, in the phrase Dr. Schelling recalls, it "escaped into print." That fine phrase, "escaped into print," has always pleased me, and I want to use it with a little different significance. We have to remind ourselves frequently that printed literature is an actual, living entity, emanating from the joys and agonies and perplexities of human beings. Too often, in reading textbooks about literature, one might imagine that writers have lived only for the purpose of writing and publishing. You might think that Oliver Goldsmith's only purpose in life was to write *She Stoops to Conquer*, or that O. Henry's extraordinary and tragic career had been totally expressed in a dozen volumes of ingenious and melodramatic short stories. We have to remind ourselves, I say, that the writings of

the most admired and cherished authors are only a small "escape into print," only a fraction of the complete energy of those lives. Those printed relics that we love are only, we might say, what spilled over the brim as they carried the bowl of consciousness, sometimes with very unsteady hands, across the crowded market places of life. And sometimes it is our duty and often our privilege to try to extend the area of those printed escapes by going around behind the textual record.

I am uncomfortably aware sometimes that my feelings and point of view toward literature are not always those ratified or commended by university authorities. I can only console myself by remembering (it is not a complete consolation, perhaps, but I can partly console myself) by remembering that even my well-beloved De Quincey was severely taken to task for the informality of his *Reminiscences of the English Lake Poets*. If you have read that adorably indiscreet book, you will remember that there are anecdotes in it which I shouldn't dare expound or even allude to here, although the book has justified itself in history and is one of the classics of its time. But university authorities will forgive almost anything to people who are dead and gone; they forgive very little to the living, breathing, and error-stricken exemplar.

Since I have mentioned De Quincey, let me add

that I regard De Quincey and Hazlitt as my tests of zealotry in books. If a man does not "get" De Quincey or Hazlitt, then from my point of view there is no real ink in his veins. When you read De Quincey's *Reminiscences of the English Lake Poets*, which I instance as an example of informality in comment on literature, you find those anecdotes about the uncomely shape of Wordsworth's legs and the fact that Mrs. Wordsworth had a pronounced obliquity of vision, and that Wordsworth wasn't always careful about the books he borrowed from Southey. He frequently cut their leaves with a buttery knife, reading them after tea and using the same knife that he had spread his hot buttered scones with; he left maculations on the pages. Yet I say to myself, would I not rather have one of those books, stained with Wordsworth's butter knife, than the most perfect mint-state copy that ever existed.

Literature and the great personalities who commit literature start sometimes very strange vibrations. As an instance of this let me tell you very briefly an extraordinary and I hope true story that André Maurois told me about that very remarkable Austrian poet, Rilke, who died a few years ago. If any of you have happened to come across that book of Rilke's, *The Journal of My Other Self*, I think you probably agree with me that it is one of the most fascinating duplicities in modern litera-

ture. Rilke had been staying at one time with some friends in Vienna, and at that time and in their house he had written a series of very passionate and beautiful love sonnets. He left his old overcoat behind him when he went away, and a good many years later another man, of quite a different sort, was staying in the same house. This other person was a meditative and somewhat misogynist philosopher who believed that women were only dangling participles in the syntax of life, and he was writing a book (as so many German and Austrian philosophers have been doing) on the downfall and decay of Western civilization. His only amusement was to go out in the afternoons and wander around the delightful streets of Vienna, in a profound darkness of spirit. He was a man essentially solitary and strongly prejudiced against the existence of the other half of the human species. It was observed by his host that the misogynist came home rather late for dinner one evening, and in a state of great agitation. His hands shook, and they couldn't make out what was the matter with him. This continued two or three days. He came home later every evening, and finally they elicited the truth. To his horror and dismay, he had been pursued everywhere he went by ladies whom he did not know. They beckoned to him from taxicabs, they sat down beside him at the tables of pavement cafés and asked him what he would have, they

followed him on the street, tucking themselves inside his rather bony elbows and laying their heads confidently on his lapel. And this was rapidly undermining his whole nervous constitution. Suddenly his hosts realized what was the trouble. He was wearing Rilke's old overcoat. He discarded the overcoat, they got him another, and the thing never happened again.

According to M. Maurois there was something in the personality of Rilke that had projected itself into his overcoat, so that women who even saw that overcoat from a distance going around a corner, said to themselves, "There is someone I have been wanting to meet all my life, there is someone who can explain to me what it is all about." It didn't rise to the point of consciousness with them, but that was the instinctive feeling they had. Fortunately it was discovered in time to save the intellect of the misogynist from shipwreck. That very informal anecdote is symbolic of many undulations in the ocean of books.

We were speaking at the close of our last meeting about Conrad, and I want to pursue the spiritual genealogy that we were tracing out. I think it is well that we should not forget that Conrad was a foreigner. Long years of living and writing in England did not alter, but only drove inward, his native quality. Montague, the great journalist, said very beautifully of him and of his relation to

England that "Surely there must be something to this nation if a man so quick to scorn justly did not disdain to take her up when he was short of a country." And it is true that Conrad's love of England and what England did for him was one of the great phases of his life. But Conrad's Polish politeness, I think, did much to conceal the purely surface nature of his assimilation. In the case of a great friend of Conrad such as Sidney Colvin, in spite of their affectionate relations through many years, I don't believe a man so immutably British as Colvin ever realized, ever imagined, how totally detached from all Anglo-Saxon ideas Conrad was.

A Polish scholar, Dr. Gustav Morf, has lately written a very brilliant book called *The Polish Heritage of Joseph Conrad*, in which he attempts to recapture Conrad for his native land and to point out, which he does with great skill, how deeply Polish idiom and Polish tradition and folklore penetrated into Conrad's written work. Dr. Morf points out that perhaps it was Conrad's loneliness, as a stranger in a far-off land, that accounted for his frequent choice of exiled and frustrated and sometimes half-crazed characters. Conrad realized, as only the very greatest creators have realized (as Shakespeare realized most of all) that very often human beings don't become available for the purposes of art until they have shaken off some of their dogged, self-preserving sanity. It is perfectly

true that some of Conrad's finest characters are people who are exiled, frustrated, and crazed.

But I think Conrad was even more foreign than an expatriated Pole. He came to us from farther away than that. He came from the land of the poet's imagination, and the extraordinary warmth of his reception and the gratitude shown by his fellow émigrés from the land of ideal values is the finest proof of that element of strangeness in his work which Bacon identified as one of the essential qualities of all great art.

Conrad was a foreigner, and his life as a writer in England was necessarily enlivened by the comedies that are inseparable from the life of any human being who is living far away from his native folk. And by far away I mean not necessarily far away in space, but far away in thought as well. I know of no more perfect and charming irony of the life of a great artist than the fact that when an offer of knighthood came down to Conrad in the country in its long blue official envelope, marked, "On His Majesty's Service," it lay for several weeks unopened on Conrad's desk, until the Prime Minister, through whose office it had come, was gravely embarrassed and had to send a personal messenger down to Conrad to inquire what had happened. Then the truth came out—Conrad had not dared to open it: he thought it was the income tax.

One could give many examples, some more comic,

some more tragic than that. Ford Madox Ford, in his delightful memoir of Conrad, describes how he and Conrad, when they were collaborating on various books, used to go up to London from Kent to call on their publisher, William Heinemann. They had a little method of campaign all planned. Heinemann's partner was a big, stolid, sensible, cool-blooded Anglo-Saxon called Pawling, and it was no good for an author to go to Pawling for an advance royalty or try to wangle anything out of him. Pawling was a solid business man and knew where an author belonged. But Heinemann was a man of temperament, with characteristic Hebraic generosity and idealism and charm. Heinemann, if he was ever got at by Conrad, whose powers of persuasion were incredible, would always come through with a check for anything Conrad might happen to need. And so the formula that Ford and Conrad worked out was this, that Ford would go in and talk to Pawling about some apparently irrelevant matter, the make-up of the coming book, or the correction of proofs, or advertising, or something of that sort, and meanwhile Conrad would slip into the inner office and get next to William Heinemann. Pawling, in his slow, dogged British way, wouldn't realize this until too late, when he would see Conrad coming out and buttoning up his overcoat over the check, and suddenly he would scream out to Ford, "You've let him get next to

that ass William again. By God, it's not cricket!" It was Pawling who persuaded Conrad not to include in the book publication of *The Nigger of the Narcissus* the magnificent preface that Conrad wrote for it. Pawling with characteristic caution probably thought it too proud a manifesto for an almost unknown writer. But we can see now that in that preface Conrad spoke as does a great king entering upon his kingdom.

I don't want you to think that casual memoranda, marginalia of that sort, are unworthy of the dignity of literature. That is the way that books are born and are made, and the inside history of literature from the beginning and until the end will always be like that. And that is what I mean when I say that it is our duty sometimes to enlarge those rather meager escapes into print which are all that the official view of literature is likely to let us have.

I meant to add also that you will find a very fascinating memoir written by Frederick Whyte, *Memoir of William Heinemann*, who was one of the most brilliant of modern publishers. He died a few years ago. When I say Heinemann was also an idealist, I was thinking of the fact that he did that rashest of all things that a publisher can do, he married one of his own authors. That has very rarely been done in the publishing business, and when done is frequently regretted.

It was Sidney Colvin who introduced me to Conrad's writing. I have often thought that there is available in Sidney Colvin's remarkable career as a mediator between artists and the more decorous world of publishing, a rather thrilling theme for some student who wants to compile a thesis on a relatively unknown figure in Victorian literature. Of course, when I say "relatively unknown," I mean by the large mass of readers. Specialists like ourselves are undoubtedly familiar with Sir Sidney Colvin as the biographer of Landor, the biographer of Keats, the life-long friend and first encourager of Robert Louis Stevenson, the Curator of Prints at the British Museum for many years. It was to Colvin that I owe my first curiosity about Conrad, and it was Colvin who in my own very small doings operates as a link in my mind between two of my large enthusiasms, Conrad and Stevenson. Stevenson had been from my teens a passion of my own. When I was a student at Oxford, with a college mate I made a bicycle pilgrimage all the way from Oxford to Edinburgh to investigate Stevenson's footprints. I even went so far as to hunt out the little country rectory at Cockfield in Suffolk, where Colvin and Stevenson had first met many years before. When I wrote as a youngster to Colvin and told him about all that, pouring out my boyish enthusiasm, it happened to come to him at a time when a certain undertow was be-

ginning to be discernible in the so-called idolatry of Stevenson, and I think he was pleased. At any rate, his kindness meant an enormous deal to me. It was more thrilling than I could now describe, for a youngster to meet a man who had known intimately every one of the figures, figures with a capital F, since Ruskin. Ruskin, Browning, Meredith, Trelawny, Hardy, all had been intimate friends of his. One could not forget, in shaking hands with Colvin, that the very palm you pressed had shaken the hand of Trelawny, those hard, quick fingers that seized Shelley's heart from the blazing embers. It meant something to a boy to know that only two handshakes separated him from the burning heart, I mean the actual, physical heart, of Shelley, that was burned on that Italian seacoast.

One of my greatest boyhood treasures was a letter of Stevenson's that Colvin gave me. It was written when Stevenson was a mere youngster and had only just met Colvin, a letter from Mentone in which the young Louis said, "I am full of literary schemes" and misspelled, as he often did, the word "literary"; until the very end of his life, Stevenson often spelled "literary" with two t's, just as Conrad, among his occasional errors in English made the mistake that so many of us make, saying "presumptuous," instead of "presumptuous." There is no such word as "presump-

tious," but anyone who dictates letters will find it in his office correspondence very frequently.

A memory occurs to me about my meeting Colvin. I told him how I had gone all the way to visit a remote rectory in Suffolk, because he and Stevenson had first met there, and he explained to me that it was not at the bird-haunted and tea-serving rectory that he and Stevenson first met, but on the little railway station platform at Cockfield. And he then told me what I had not known, that the next station was that of Lavenham, that beautiful old town in Suffolk famous for one of the most impressive of English rural churches and for the fact that Anne and Jane Taylor lived there, and that "Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star" was supposed to have been written there. I afterwards discovered that this local tradition was wrong, because Jane Taylor was only some twelve or thirteen years old when her family moved away from Lavenham, and the original *Songs for Infant Minds* in which "Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star" and "I Love Little Pussy" and the rest of those fascinating children's poems occur, was not printed until about 1804. I expect that our founder and patron Dr. Rosenbach has a copy of that 1804 edition in his unrivaled collection of children's books. That, however, is only a footnote. But the fact that Lavenham was the next station to Cockfield added to my associations.

There was a certain continuity in my mind between Stevenson and Conrad which was not merely due to the fact that Colvin had been the great friend of them both. Conrad himself had a somewhat low opinion of Stevenson's work, which, with his Central European politeness, he always concealed from Colvin, yet there are certain analogies between their writings. The men were very different. I think Conrad, the sardonic brooder, rather resented Stevenson's perpetual high spirits, which were really a pathological symptom. Conrad, on the other hand, as someone said, "suffered from gout and unwritten books," and those two were enough to keep any man sardonic. But if you will read a story such as "The Secret Sharer," in the volume *Twixt Land and Sea* by Conrad, and then turn back to some of Stevenson's psychological studies, such as *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*, or *Markheim*, you will see more than a little similarity in their method and in their thought. You should read "The Secret Sharer" if you are not familiar with it, because although relatively little esteemed, I think it is one of the profoundest psychological studies that Conrad ever wrote, and a curious parallel with *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*. Conrad's study of the unknown intruder who comes on board the ship by night and is hidden away in the captain's cabin so that he begins to seem almost like a duplicate of the captain's own thought and fore-

boding, seems a potent allegory of the situation of a man about to undertake a terribly difficult task and who is aware at the same time of a secret weakness in his own character; he cannot really get started on that task until he finds that that weakness is out and over the side and away and done with. And similarly, in that story, the ship-master can't get started on the voyage until this mysterious intruder in the cabin has been released from the ship. That is a story that would have fascinated Stevenson if he could have read it, and which is very much in a Stevensonian vein.

Another treasure of mine is the copy of *Travels with a Donkey* which was autographed by the donkey herself. If you remember that enchanting early work of Stevenson's, you recall that the donkey, named Modestine, was the heroine of the piece, and our old friend Mr. A. Edward Newton some years ago, in a burst of totally unwarranted but not unappreciated generosity, gave me the very copy of *Travels with a Donkey* which Stevenson had inscribed as from Modestine. It was signed, "From Modestine, per R. L. S." and was given to Stevenson's good friend the doctor in Bournemouth with the sadly appropriate initials, Dr. T. B. Scott. Dr. Scott, you remember, was the subject of the dedication of Stevenson's book, *Underwoods*, one of the most beautiful dedications ever written to any doctor or healer of human woes.

Another Stevensonian item that is no less dear to me, which I picked up at Leary's for, I think, not more than fifteen or twenty cents—I can see the little blue pencil-mark in it characteristic of Leary's, the price mark with the line over it in Philip Warner's handwriting that we all know. I think it was fifteen or twenty cents, but it is an actual first edition of *The Wrong Box*. I couldn't get it signed by Stevenson himself, but I did get it signed by the co-author, Lloyd Osbourne. *The Wrong Box*, I think, must stand high among contenders for the subtlest bit of spoof in the English language. As you remember, one of its leading characters is an old gentleman whose wits have been utterly addled by a passion for public lecturing.

Stevenson's favorite nickname for Colvin was "The Stern Parent." There always was something of the disciplinarian in Colvin. For example, it was characteristic of him that he instructed his butler not to refill more than once the wine glass of a certain dramatic and dionysiac poet who came to dine with him occasionally, Stephen Phillips. Stephen Phillips's brother has told me of the anguish of the poet, when he discovered at a dinner party of Colvin's that the butler was going all around the table, filling every one else's glass, but making a detour behind Stephen Phillips's chair. His despairing and unavailing efforts to catch the

butler's eye and even to reach out and seize him by the coat tails, were very characteristic of the dramatic poet. But Colvin knew that more than two glasses of wine was too much for Phillips, and what Colvin knew he always acted upon.

It must have required extraordinary tact in Colvin's career never to have got involved in those deplorable quarrels that followed Stevenson's death when, as you may remember, so many men of letters in England fell afoul of one another because each one claimed to have been Stevenson's most intimate friend. For years these quarrels went on. They all loved Stevenson so much that they wouldn't speak to each other. Colvin, by some miracle of tact, managed to remain friends with them all.

There is another continuity between Stevenson and Conrad, an actual continuity in time. At the very moment when Stevenson was at work on his last and greatest book, *Weir of Hermiston*, the one that burst his brain and killed him, Conrad was at that same time reading the proofs of his first novel, *Almayer's Folly*.

Another curious episode, perhaps one of the most curious in modern literary history, was the voyage John Galsworthy made in the ship *Torrens*, of which at that time Conrad was mate. I think the time was about 1892 or 1893. Galsworthy had planned a pilgrimage to Samoa in hope of visiting

Stevenson, and sailed in the *Torrens*, Conrad's ship. He never got to Samoa to visit Stevenson, but how amazed he would have been at that time if he could have known that the mate of the sailing ship in which he traveled was to become a writer far greater even than Stevenson himself. It was surely a paradox for which he could not have been prepared.

These vibrations that great books and the personalities behind them set up, may travel a surprisingly long way. It was a paragraph I wrote in a newspaper about Conrad's frequent misuse of "shall" and "will" that introduced me to another writer of the sea. I had pointed out that Conrad almost invariably got "shall" and "will" twisted, to which I received an interesting reply from a Scottish shipmaster, Captain David Bone, pointing out that Conrad (a very ingenious defense this) had learned his English from Scottish sailormen who habitually reverse our usage of "shall" and "will." A Scot, as you know, will never say, for example, "Shall I open the window?"—He always says, "Will I open the window?" There was the famous story of the Scotchman who drowned in the Serpentine in London because when he was sinking he kept ejaculating in a loud and plaintive voice, "I will drown and nobody shall save me," and this, to his English listeners, expressed nothing but a determination to drown, and consequently

no one paid any attention. But that was Captain Bone's way of accounting for Conrad's "shalls" and "wills." It would be more difficult, perhaps, to account for Conrad's equal misuse of "lie" and "lay."

Incidentally, don't let yourself be deceived by off-hand literary critics who tell you how beautifully Conrad wrote. Conrad did not always write beautifully, nor does any writer who is worth profound consideration always write beautifully. Many quick-witted men who put their minds on the matter can write beautifully, but very few can think beautifully. Conrad did not always write beautifully, but he always thought beautifully. The same is true of W. H. Hudson, whose writing often was clumsy, but the thought behind it was invariably exquisite.

Captain Bone, whom I met through this correspondence about Conrad, is not only distinguished as a shipmaster, but is important to booklovers as well, not only for his own very fine writings—his sea story, *The Brassbounder*, has been called by Conrad himself the finest sea narrative of its kind since *Two Years Before the Mast*—but also distinguished by the fact that he is important to bibliographers. Captain Bone published the first book (so far as I know) that was ever published at sea. In his ship, the *Tuscania*, he founded the world's first seafaring bookshop. It was called "The

High Seas Book Shop," and by arrangement with his London publishers an edition of one of his own books, *The Lookout Man*, was especially imprinted for the High Seas Book Shop, and on the publication date, those copies were broken out and sold in mid-ocean. As you know, printing is not publication. The publishing of a book means the actual vending of it to customers, and the first copies of that book that ever were sold were sold in mid-Atlantic on the ship *Tuscania*.

The first deep-sea bookseller, who took charge for several voyages of Captain Bone's seafaring bookshop, was William McFee, the maritime engineer and novelist. At that time there was a curious question of etiquette. It was certainly the first time in the history of the world that a shipmaster and a chief engineer entered into that particular relation together. McFee was on leave from the United Fruit Company, his regular employers, where he had the full rank of a chief engineer, and the question was what uniform should a bookseller on board a ship wear. The job of bookseller on board ship has been codified since then; it now has a special rating of its own, as purser's clerk. But at that time there were no precedents, and so McFee, to make quite sure the dignity of a seafaring bookseller would be respected, wore the complete uniform of a Chief Engineer of the United

Fruit Company, which was quite a surprise to customers on board Captain Bone's ship.

It reminds me of many modern variations in nautical ratings and seafaring personnel. Captain Bone had a new ship entrusted to him that had a large palm garden and all sorts of veranda cafés and shrubbery alcoves that he had not had before. He was inspecting his new command and was startled to find a man with a curious uniform such as he had never seen in all his lifetime at sea. He beckoned to this chap and said, "Who are you? What is your job?" looking at some peculiar embroidery on the lapels of this man's coat. And this chap said, rather shamefacedly, "Beg pardon, sir, but I'm the ship's gardener." His job was to go around and cherish all the potted palms and various horticulture that a big modern liner has.

I am trying, with all the embarrassment incidental to such an attempt, to carry on the idea of this spiritual genealogy we spoke of, the way that books we love reach out to other books, and how all these interlacing roots of association wind together. I suggested that it was through Sidney Colvin that I deepened my love of Stevenson and learned something about Conrad. It was from my interest in Conrad that I became acquainted with Captain Bone, whose books we haven't time to discuss in detail. I must mention one, his marvelous history of the British merchant services during the

war, *Merchantmen at Arms*, illustrated by his brother, the great artist, Muirhead Bone. I mention that book because it contains what is to me one of the noblest bits of Spartan prose in modern writing, his account of the sinking of his own ship, the *Cameronia*, torpedoed in the Mediterranean during the war. The restraint and yet the underlying passion with which he tells that tragic story is something that could hardly be improved. When the *Cameronia* was torpedoed, she sank very fast. There were several thousand wounded men between decks being brought back from Gallipoli, and there wasn't time to get more than a few of them off. But those that could get off, who were able to move, ran to the forward deck and jumped from the sinking troopship to the bow of a destroyer, one of the convoy, which came right up alongside. Captain Bone stood on the bridge of his own ship, felt her going down, saw these men jumping off until the destroyer was loaded right down to the water line, and couldn't take any more for fear of foundering herself. He felt his ship going down beneath his feet with these thousands of wounded men for whom he could do nothing. It was a ghastly moment; in his description of it in print, you discern the emotion underneath, but there is no melodrama in the printed words themselves. I have been told that when there was nothing more that the captain could do, as

the ship actually went down under his feet and he stood on the bridge with his hand holding the quivering rail of his shaking ship (because a dying ship trembles just as a dying animal does), he took out his pipe and tobacco pouch and began to smoke. When he was picked up from the water by one of the destroyers who came to the rescue, the commander said "Well, Captain, that was a grand bit of swank that you did on the bridge." And Bone said, "What was that?" "Why," said the commander, "just as she was going down, you took out your pipe and pouch and lit up just as calmly as though you were in your armchair at home." And Bone had never even known that he had done it; he did it absolutely unconsciously. So when the commander praised him for it he was very indignant. He said, "I was in despair; I didn't know what I was doing."

I mention Captain Bone particularly because while he is not a man of letters by profession, I know of no one in our time who has performed a more useful service as an international courier. I shall use him as a transition, perhaps, to bring us across the ocean. We have dallied for some time over British writers; I shall call upon Captain Bone to bring us back to our native shore, to discuss some American writers. There is one special thing for which the world of literature must always be grateful to him. It was he who brought to this

country the first copy of the noblest book, I think, that has yet been written about the war, C. E. Montague's *Disenchantment*. When it had been turned down by a dozen American publishers, it was Captain Bone who brought it personally to me and said, "Here is a book which is so great that it is outrageous a year has gone by and it hasn't been published in this country. Isn't there anything you can do about it?" And Bone and I put our heads together and got the book published. My copy of *Disenchantment* is not a first edition—I am much more of a connoisseur than that. First editions are relatively frequent. But out of my copy of *Disenchantment*, which Captain Bone brought me, every copy that has been printed in America was born.

Disenchantment was the *All Quiet* of the intellectual classes. It is not a book that is ever likely to have many thousands of readers, but it was the first book, I think (published in 1922), that expressed intelligent and sensitive men's indignation and revulsion in regard to the War and the peace that they felt was no real peace. It was the first time that any man of great sensitive powers expressed himself in those matters. And when I tell you that that book is now out of print and unobtainable in this country, in spite of its beauty, in spite of its passion and its truth, one of the great books of our time; when I tell you that book

is now out of print and that no hounding and no persuasion for the last three or four years by all sorts of people have ever persuaded publishers to take a chance and reprint it, I tell you that to remind you that the great things need our help. Every one of us can help in the endless battle of keeping great books in print, keeping them alive and helping them foster and transmit and hand on the powers that are in them. We said that these "escapes into print" are only what brimmed over that vessel of consciousness that the writer may have carried with very unsteady hands through the cruel market place of life. It is our job to see that those precious essences are not wasted and that they don't dry up on stony soil.

Carrier Pigeons

I WANT TO TELL YOU A little story of how life comes to heel after literature. The theme, if any, of these afternoons really is the inextricable interweaving of life and literature and the truth that literature is imbedded in life and can't be put into textbooks and analyzed and discussed as though it were a laboratory process.

The other afternoon I had to go to Worcester, Massachusetts, on an errand of my own, and as usual, when I have a long train ride ahead of me, I think, "What will be an appropriate thing to read on the trip?" Usually, when I travel from the Grand Central Station, I abide by the hazard of the counters of that well-known collector, Mr. Liggett. Liggett's Grand Central Drug Store is one of the few places I know where you can always find the classics very cheap. The great writers, such as Plato, Spinoza, Voltaire, and all the medieval philosophers who are difficult to obtain in the regular bookshops can always be had nowadays in drug stores and cigar stores. Consequently I thought, "Shall I take a chance on what Mr. Liggett hap-

pens to have, from his notorious library, or shall I take something with me?" And I didn't have very much time; I knew that I would not have leisure to examine Mr. Liggett's counters carefully, so I took with me a little book of selections from one of my favorite authors whom I have mentioned here before, Thomas Fuller, the famous seventeenth-century divine. I was particularly eager to read that edition for this reason, that one of my secret ambitions for many years has been to re-edit Fuller's *Holy State and Profane State*, the great book first published in 1642, and which has never since been independently published. But I learned a few weeks ago, to my dismay, that a scholar (another scholar) had got ahead of me. Professor Broadus, of the University of Alberta, had edited for the Oxford Press a volume which I commend as the ideal Christmas present for commuters into the seventeenth century, a volume of selections from Fuller. So, partly with the amorous anticipation of a lover of Fuller, and partly with the secret jealousy of a rival and disappointed editor, I took this book along. It is true that I stopped at Mr. Liggett's and there I found some excellent editions of Henry James, marked \$2.50 but selling for fifty cents, and from the Grand Central Station to New Haven I endeavored, with considerable application and small success, to lose

myself in the Jacobite meanderings. At New Haven I laid down Henry James and went back to Thomas Fuller, in whom I found rich reward.

Now, the coincidence which I laboriously approach came about as follows: I had written a few days before to a friend of mine on the staff of the Oxford University Press, saying that I had heard of this new edition of selections from Fuller, and that when it came to Thomas Fuller, I was the original Fuller Brush Man. I apologize for that, it was a cheap witticism, and particularly so because the phrase "The Fuller Brush Man" meant nothing to me; it was one of those random words that I had heard vaguely without knowing just what it meant or where it came from. True, I had been approached at my own front door by a mysterious famulus, calling himself "The Fuller Brush Man"; I had also heard him rave on the kilocycles, but still it didn't really mean anything to me. I didn't know anything about Fuller brushes, and the Fuller Brush Man himself might have lived anywhere from Maine to Manila, as far as I knew or cared. So I sat in the train from New Haven northward, reading Thomas Fuller and joying in his exquisite felicities. I laid down the book at one moment, transfixed by some particularly lovely paragraph of his—I think it was the one where he asks himself whether he had said his prayers that morning and he admitted that he couldn't remem-

ber whether he had done so, and then suddenly he says, "Well, if I can't remember whether I have said my prayers or not, why should God pay any attention to me?" I laid down the book to think that over and glanced out of the window; and just at that exact instant, not more than a second's duration, the one instant when it might have happened in that whole journey, just north of Hartford, as I looked out of the window there was the Fuller Brush Factory.

I admit it is not very important, but I felt it was magic. That is the way life comes to heel to literature.

One more thing about Fuller. I did feel relieved to observe that Professor Broadus, in editing that volume of selections (which I repeat makes an ideal Christmas present for a sensitive reader) left out, or rather didn't put in (a more generous way to put it) the grandest thing that Fuller ever said. Fuller tells the marvelous story, a perfect fable for teachers, of the gentleman who took a number of children for a walk into the country, and forgetting they were so much younger than himself, he led them farther than he intended to. They began to "grutch," complained that they were tired and began to whine. I can't accurately quote Fuller's language, but he describes that this gentleman cut a big stick from the hedge as a nag for himself, and little switches as ponies for the children, and

told them that they were horses, and thus mounted, he says, "Fancy," (or what we would call imagination) "Fancy put metal into their legs and they came cheerfully home." And I often think to myself, if only teachers would remember that, if they would just enliven our pedestrianism now and then with a little more imagination, how much longer journeys we could take, and how much more cheerfully we would get home.

We were reminding ourselves of the fact that De Quincey was severely criticized for the informality of his comments on the English lake poets. Certainly I would not dare to subject my own favorite group of salt-water prose writers, some of whom we were mentioning, to the same personal scrutiny that De Quincey gave the English fresh-water poets. At the same time, there are one or two personal liberties that must in duty be risked. We were saying that it was due to Captain David Bone that Montague's great book *Disenchantment* was published in this country. I want to suggest to any budding or ambitious bibliographer that there would be no more fascinating task than compiling a bibliography of the Bone family. I doubt if in our time there has been any family group showing such consanguine talent. Captain Bone, not only a distinguished sailor, but a distinguished writer. Captain Bone's brother, Muirhead Bone, the very great artist. Another

brother, James Bone, the London editor of *The Manchester Guardian*, the author of *The London Perambulator*, certainly one of the most beautiful books ever written about the world's greatest city. I don't complete the roster for the young bibliographer, he must hunt it out himself. David Bone's daughter, Freda Bone, who illustrates his *Capstan Bars* and is a charming artist in woodcuts. Muirhead Bone's wife, Gertrude, a rare poet and mystic. Muirhead's son, Stephen Bone, who although in his early twenties, is already one of the ablest artists in London, and did the mural paintings in the new Piccadilly Circus underground station. And so you could go on. I suggest that the Bone family would make an extraordinarily interesting theme for the bibliographer. Also, some of their works he will find very difficult to procure—for instance the scarce *Glasgow in 1901* by "James Hamilton Muir," a pseudonym composited from the names James Bone, Muirhead Bone, and Hamilton Charteris.

Some years ago Mr. Van Lear Black, the ingenious editor and owner of the *Baltimore Sun*, wanted to give Captain Bone a present, and he decided to give him a bell for his ship. The ship, of course, had its regular bells already, but Mr. Black had the very pleasant idea of donating an additional bell on which the hours and watches might be struck on special occasions. The bell was

cast at a famous bell foundry in Whitechapel, London, and in a privately printed book which commemorated the occasion, there was described how when a bronze bell is cast, just at the crucial moment of the process a gold coin is thrown into the molten metal, which apparently is necessary for perfection of tone. And reading that, I thought to myself how in the strong and tough metal of the Scottish temperament of the Bone family there had been cast the unmistakable gold coin of genius. It shows, I suppose, at its richest mint-purity in Muirhead Bone, one of the greatest of modern artists, but it shines through the life of the whole family.

The young bibliographer of the Bone family will discover a great many interesting things about all its members. I am thinking for the moment of Muirhead Bone's youth, as a young and struggling artist in Glasgow, when he painted tables and chairs in a peasant furniture shop to earn his pin money. He didn't exactly know how an etching was made, and tried to make his pen drawings look as much like etchings as possible by dipping them in weak tea, so as to give that somewhat brownish or coppery tint. And the first etchings by Muirhead Bone, which are now beyond price, and are in the greatest museums in the world, were done on the backs of zinc plates used for calling cards. A stationer gave him a lot of old

plates from which engraved calling cards had been printed, and with great care he smoothed off the backs of these little zinc plates. He took one of his mother's darning needles and fastened it into a piece of wood with sealing wax and scratched his first etchings on the backs of those little zinc plates. That is one more proof, if we needed any, that you can't stop a man from doing what he wants to do, once he finds out what that is.

We introduced Captain Bone by the fact that it was he who told us of Montague's great book, *Disenchantment*. I can't leave the topic of Montague quite so abruptly. It is difficult to choose in a few minutes what would be most significant to tell. I want to read a few words from a letter written just after his death by his friend and mine, H. M. Tomlinson. Tomlinson tells how he went out for a ride on top of a bus in London and saw one of those newspaper posters such as are displayed on the London streets when extras come out. All he saw on the placard was the name "C. E. Montague," and he knew, of course, what that meant. That night he wrote me this letter: "I see him now, on his fiftieth birthday, at a table in France where all were in uniform. I see him now as he was one night when the others had retired, and the falling ash of the logs on the hearth of that old château was the only sound except the fluttering of the guns at Ypres and he

divulged an intent to explain his disenchantment. And I see him and Massingham together by Pozières of the Somme, desolation and a north wind and the howitzers going it. Ghosts, ghosts!”

That old château to which he refers was the château at Rollancourt, the press headquarters where the correspondents of the London newspapers were quartered and where Montague at that time was attached as liaison officer in charge of the correspondents. It was Montague's duty to take these journalists on tour among the trenches. Montague himself, you remember, had joined the army at the very beginning of the war, when he was the chief editorial writer of *The Manchester Guardian*, and already a man of forty-seven. His hair had gone, even at that early age, a remarkably pure white. He dyed his hair black, went away to a recruiting station where no one knew him, and served as a private soldier for I think more than a year before it was discovered by the authorities that he was the great Montague, the brilliant journalist. He had by that time worked his way up to the rank of sergeant and was greatly annoyed when he was taken out of the combat line, made a captain on the staff, and given the job of supervising the newspaper correspondents, one of whom, Mr. Nevinson, remarked that he knew of many men whose hair had turned white with

terror, but that Montague was the only man he ever knew whose hair turned dark with courage.

Montague, since he felt the war was something that had to be gone through with, had a curious Puritan determination, so to speak, to get the worst out of it. He didn't want anyone to suffer more than he did. That was part of his whole chivalrous and knightly quality as a man, that you would always find him where the suffering was greatest. His sympathies were so strong with the horrors endured by the men in the actual trenches that even when he was on duty at that château, Tomlinson has described to me how Montague always made himself as uncomfortable as possible. After dinner in the evening, when there were no jobs to be done, or the correspondents perhaps were working on their stories and Montague's duty for the day was over, he would never come close to the fire and be warm. You know how cold it can be in an old French château in winter time. Nevertheless, Montague would never take an easy chair, he would never approach the fireplace. He sat down after dinner in a small, hard chair, diagonally across the room from the fireplace, and sat there reading a book, usually as difficult a book as possible, something like Plato, or Tacitus or his favorite Thucydides. That was all part of his subconscious doctrine. Tomlinson told me that before he got to know Montague well he noticed

with some curiosity that at dinner, Montague always gathered up any bits of bread or cake or rolls or crusts of any sort that were left over, and Tomlinson wondered why this was. He wondered whether it was that Montague didn't get enough to eat, or perhaps he was one of those who couldn't sleep at night unless he had something to eat just before going to bed. And then one day, he went out for a walk with Montague and discovered what these pocketfuls of crumbs were for. He carefully strewed them over the countryside for the deserted hens of those destroyed and desolated villages. Wherever he was and whatever he was doing, it was the other fellow; whether it was a hen or man or any living thing, it was the other fellow that Montague was always thinking of.

I couldn't help thinking, the other day, how different was the point of view of a certain field marshal, who was asked whether the cross-channel services were efficient during the war. He replied, with perfect naïveté, that the Dover patrol was so well arranged that he himself could leave the War Office in Whitehall after lunch, (and this was his exact phrase) "and get to G. H. Q. in France in time for tea." That was the point of view, whether deliberate or unconscious, that Montague was out to smash, and *Disenchantment*, that beautiful, bitter, passionate and fiery book, is, I believe, a lasting attack upon that easygoing notion of

getting to G. H. Q. in time for tea. The idea that you can put millions of men out in mud and muck and filth to sacrifice their lives, and go through unimaginable obscenities, while other men are getting to G. H. Q. in time for tea, in time to look over the maps and see what may have happened.

I remember very vividly one afternoon when my wife and I were visiting Montague, only a few months before his death, at his home in the Cotswolds. It was an exquisite sunny interval, and as we sat in the rose garden we noticed among the domestic pigeons another bird that didn't belong there, a pigeon obviously a stranger, and seemingly an anxious and disturbed pigeon. And looking a little more carefully at it, Montague, whose eyes were always brighter than anyone else's, noticed that it had some sort of bandage or attachment on one leg, fastened by a piece of adhesive tape. It was evidently a carrier pigeon, carrying a message. I am sorry to say that the message may only have been some unimportant and irrelevant betting information. As you know, the bookmakers in London, before various sporting events send out a great many of their private tips to customers by means of carrier pigeons, so the message that this bird was carrying may or may not have been of any intellectual importance. But the thing that was interesting was to see the dialogue between Montague and the carrier pigeon. The bird was a

stranger and uncertain, it seemed to have hurt its wing in some way, and had come down obviously off its course; it knew that it should be getting on and yet it was not in condition to fly. Montague walked up to it on the gravel driveway, and tried to coax it to him. It was very shy and doubtful, but little by little it teetered up to him with that hesitating, quick, tense manner that pigeons have, and he seemed to be talking to it. I always regret that I had no camera, because the picture of Montague with his white hair and his deeply sunburned and weathered face, leaning over and exchanging the rhetoric of the eye with this anxious pigeon, was a very beautiful sight. The pigeon obviously recognized in him a kindred spirit, and I thought to myself that they were truly birds of a feather; that he, like that pigeon, had been all his life commissioned with urgent messages, and there was no rest for the messenger until the message was delivered. That was what was so plain in the demeanor of that pigeon, that it couldn't be happy until its wing was bound up and it was once more on the way.

I think of Montague together with his friend Tomlinson, because in many respects they are two of a kind. They are not primarily novelists. Tomlinson is not temperamentally a writer of fiction, and I don't believe that Montague was, although he wrote some very singular novels. I think of them

as soothsayers, not as novelists. It is true that the short stories that Montague wrote in *Fiery Particles* are among the best things he ever did. But temperamentally I think he was too subtle and allusive to be a first-class writer of fiction. Just as I am positive that Tomlinson's mind runs too far inward to write fiction. If you should ever wonder whether Shakespeare is really worth studying, you might make a diversion of studying the allusions to Shakespeare in Montague's work, particularly in *Disenchantment*. I doubt if there has ever been a mind more deeply steeped and tinged in Shakespearean lingo than Montague's, and throughout that book, *Disenchantment*, as indeed throughout all his work, almost unconscious shreds of Shakespeare keep rising to the surface and flowing down the current of his thought.

I was looking over some letters of Montague's the other day. A number of his letters have been published in the biography of Montague, but of all the letters I had from him I didn't feel there were any that could be published in that collection; they are a little too intimate. But I think in our classroom here, it may be interesting to quote from a couple of them.

The first one alludes to some verses that I sent him bearing upon the famous old bathing place at Oxford, called "Parson's Pleasure." It was called "Parson's Pleasure" because in the early days of

the nineteenth century, when that bathing place first became really popular at Oxford, it was supposed to be the only place where parsons, of whom Oxford is full, ever took a bath. In the old days at Oxford, you had to pay sixpence for a hot bath, and as no parson or divinity student could afford to pay this he went out to a secluded bend in the river Cherwell and did his ablutions there.

Montague, like myself and any other aquatic man who ever went to Oxford, was a lover of "Parson's Pleasure." And apropos of those verses about that subject, he wrote, "They wring my heart with real agonies of tenderness towards my lost youth. Wasted as it might seem to the unwise, on rowing and many games and divagations from high-roads but really the youth of a *dévol*, a serious non-waster of forenoon sunshine, a conscientious non-blasphemer of leisure and the Thames side, and the cricket fields of Dorchester and Islip and other the clearest manifestations of God.

"And now I thank you, sir, that can say without a lapse from reverence or beauty, the truth that has long skulked unuttered in my timid heart, that considered physically as a bathing place and not as a temple, Parson's Pleasure was mediocre. Slugs in the dressing hutches, no life in the water, no sun to stand in when drying, the chill of a morgue over the whole place on all but the most fervent dog days. And yet a grave part of death's

menace is that under the mould we may forget Parson's Pleasure. Here's with you to the last in the policy of the jubilant worship of life without mean reservations. Even now are my creatures, Brandt and Kirkpatrick" (that is a firm of literary agents in New York) "striving to vend in the marts of your land a slender book of devotion,* a kind of missal, illuminated as gaily as my homely paint box will allow, a real lip-smacking, thigh-slapping hymn to the sun and most of the things that he despects. Oh but sincere, all that there is of sincerity, if with myself I hold intelligence."

And another very brief extract from a different letter, speaking of the novel *Rough Justice* on which he was working. I read this extract because it is the best proof I know that he was not by nature a writer of fiction:—

"I struggle with an intractable novel, sometimes curling its charmless tail and sometimes sharpening its amorphous snout and anon striving to breathe life into its dead waste and middle. I hope you don't find that in this sort of statuary you first have to lay down a quarry of solid words and then cut the thing's figure out of it by vasty labors of chipping off and rejection till the original intention is or isn't disengaged from the preliminary verbiage. I can't think anyone ever had a worse method unless it was Andrew Lang, who had a

* His reference is to his book *The Right Place*.

different book going on in every room of the house and wrote according to where he was at the time, and always got late with his reviews for the Manchester Guardian because, we think, he did 'em in the bathroom."

It is tragic to think how much one might say about Montague that there will never be time to say. I will just conclude this paragraph by remembering the glorious episode he recounts in *Disenchantment*, where he tells how just after the Armistice he was quartered in Cologne, in a room overlooking the great square where the Cathedral is. On a moonlit night when that whole open space was bathed in white radiance, he heard some talking going on long after all talking should have been stopped; a couple of Scotch kilties who evidently had had several drinks were talking to a very downhearted German citizen of Cologne. Evidently this good old German burgher had been lamenting to the Scotch invaders about the terrible fate of Germany, how the German Empire had been crushed and the German soldiers had been beaten, and the world had come to an end. And the remark that Montague overheard was typical, I think, of combatants of all times and all nations. He heard one of these kilties say to the old German, "Och, dinna take it to hairt, mon. I tell ye, your lads were grrrand." As Montague used to say, "War hath no fury like a non-com-

batant." There was no hatred in the men who had to do the fighting themselves. By the time they got to Cologne, they were far beyond hating anyone or anything except the people on either side who sent them there.

Coming back across—"stepping westward" as Wordsworth used to say—I am not much of a believer in nationality in art. It can be unduly minimized—it can also be unduly exaggerated—but perhaps at any rate it is a symbol of the oneness of all English-written literature, that my first acquaintance with young American writing took place in a lodging house in Oxford. In the academic year 1910-11, a young graduate of your own university was living in lodgings on Iffley Road in Oxford, just across lovely old Magdalen Bridge. And going there one day to have tea with him, in the springtime when the almond blossoms come out by Magdalen Bridge, I met in his sitting room the first person in whom I saw physically incarnated the actuality of literature. It was a certain Mr. Ferdinand Earle, whose name you are all too young to remember, but a name that was very famous in those simple days. Mr. Ferdinand Earle had taken very literally Goethe's famous doctrine of *Wahlverwandschaften*, which may be translated as "Elective affinities"—the doctrine of what we might call local option between the sexes. Mr. Earle had taken this famous hypothesis so prag-

matically that he had gotten into the newspaper headlines; he had left his native country and was trying to forget the irrelevant publicity to which he had been subjected, by studying at Oxford. It was quite a thrill for the young University of Pennsylvania man and myself to meet a man who not only had been the hero of newspaper headlines, but also had published an actual volume of poetry, and quite meritorious poetry too. The newspaper headlines, I repeat, were irrelevant; the important thing was that Mr. Earle talked a great deal to us about a poetry competition which was then being organized in the United States. The one hundred best poems submitted were to be collected and published in a book of which he was to be the editor. Our minds immediately ran on ahead, as the minds of young versifiers always do, and we thought, "Wouldn't it be nice if we could write something and get it into that book"; then in our more pressing Oxonian affairs, we forgot about it. But that book duly appeared the following year, 1912. It was called *The Lyric Year*, published by Mitchell Kennerley in New York, and edited by Earle. The winner of that prize competition was Orrick Johns. The second prize was equally divided between George Sterling, of California, and our own Tom Daly; and the third award was granted to a young girl, still in her teens, whose name you will have no difficulty in recognizing. There in

that book, five years before any volume of her own first appeared, was Edna Millay's beautiful poem "Renascence." That book, the names of whose one hundred authors constituted an *adsumus* of modern American verse, I think should be the foundation stone in any collection of contemporary American poetry. And it was in that book, published in 1912, that I encountered for the first time the name of a man to whom we can appropriately devote some thought now. Edna Millay and many others introduce new associations that I want to take up as far as time serves, but at the moment I want to remind you that it was in that year 1912 that one first heard of the work of Vachel Lindsay, who died last Saturday,* very prematurely and very profoundly lamented.

In literature as in wine, there are vintage years. Another suggestion I should like to make to students of bibliography is that they make a careful study of publishing lists and see if there was not really some singular turning of tides and radiation of new feelings and new impulses in that year, 1912. It is extraordinary when you look back at some of the things that were published in that year on both sides of the Atlantic. John Masefield had just made his first popular success. Amy Lowell published her first book of poems. Sinclair Lewis published his first book, a book for young people,

* December 5, 1931.

called *Hike and the Aeroplane*, written over the pseudonym of "Tom Graham." William McFee came to this country that year, intent on finishing the manuscript of his *Casuals of the Sea*, a book that became justly famous some years later. Mencken was just beginning his eloquent and vigorous career. Robert Frost in that year sold his farm in New England and went to live in old England to write poetry. Eugene O'Neill in that year went to a sanitarium in Connecticut and took time to think things over and decide that he would write plays. H. M. Tomlinson's first book, *The Sea and the Jungle*, was published in that year. John Macy was writing his *Spirit of American Literature*, a frank and fresh summary which did much to turn our self-criticism into new paths. It is hard to recall all these facts extempore, and again, I don't propose to do the young bibliographer's job for him. Elinor Wylie's first book was published anonymously in London that year, a little book of verses which she would never allow anyone to identify, and which was never republished. And although it may not have any very close bearing on literature, in that year also the Columbia School of Journalism was founded. Just what that means, it is still too early to say. Also, in that year, to dip to a further bathos, Colonel Edward M. House wrote his anonymous novel, which I am afraid lured me once into a very rude

remark for which Colonel House will never forgive me. It was on an occasion when Joseph Conrad was reading something of his own at a small and rather select gathering, and Colonel House happened to be there. So, meeting Colonel House casually after Conrad had made his talk, I couldn't resist saying, "Well, Colonel, it is quite an occasion to see in one and the same room, the world's best and the world's worst novelist." I made that remark, crude as it sounds, deliberately, because I wanted to find out if Colonel House was as great a diplomat as all the newspapers had represented him to be. You see, if he paid any attention to that remark and showed that he thought it was rude that would prove he had written the book, the existence of which he had never admitted. Of course it was an unpardonable thing to do, because how would Colonel House realize that we literary people talk to each other with much more candor than the great lords of diplomacy?

It was in the book called *The Lyric Year* that Vachel Lindsay's first poem that reached any publication of dignity appeared. It was in the spring of 1912, before *The Lyric Year* was published, that a local printer out in Springfield, Illinois, prepared Vachel Lindsay's extraordinary little pamphlet called *Rhymes to Be Traded in Exchange for Bread*. Of that little pamphlet I am proud to have an autographed copy Vachel gave me. It was really

the first of those many flying leaves that represent the renaissance in American poetry during the last fifteen or twenty years.

You remember Vachel's doctrine, that he was to go out on the road, taking no baggage, being truthful and civil to everyone, coming to his hoped-for destination about an hour before supper so that the housewife might have time to put on an extra chop or whatever it might be. Vachel built his whole literary and artistic philosophy on a very sound, practical basis. He had it all thought out to simplify the technique of getting a free meal. And if more poets had that clear and good human earthy instinct for reality that Vachel had, poetry would be greater than it is. That little pamphlet, I suppose, will some day be one of the most precious of modern American items. Vachel took an oilcloth-bound bundle of them with him on his trips and he had additional copies sent ahead by parcel post to large cities that he expected to pass through on his tramping tours. He would turn up at a farmhouse or wherever looked likely, and he would make himself as esteemed and respectable looking as possible and would tap on the door, and before they could say much he would begin reciting poetry. Such was his charm, such was his magnetism, that they usually took him in and had a very happy evening together; he read and recited poetry and gave away these pamphlets

for a night's lodging. But they were never circulated through any of the official literary channels, and though there may be hundreds or thousands of them scattered around in rural districts they are very hard to find in the regular haunts of literature.

My own first experience with Vachel Lindsay's poetry I shall never forget. It was on a very cold morning, just before Christmas 1913, in the Old Corner Book Store in Boston. I was at that time working as an additional hand in that famous bookshop. I used to go up there every year before Christmas for two weeks, to work as a book clerk and learn something about the actual problems of passing on the book to the customer. And being the junior member of the staff, they gave me the most uncomfortable position in the store in winter time, which was the post right by the front door. Every time that front door opened, a great gust of wind and snow and cold air would come in, and chilled the young clerk to the bone. But fortunately against the front window there was a radiator, and early in the morning, before traffic became brisk, I used to stand as close to that radiator as possible and try to accumulate enough calories to last me through the colder part of the day which I knew was coming. One of those mornings, before anyone had come into the store, I happened to pick up a little book published that autumn, called

General William Booth Enters into Heaven. And immediately such trifling things as whether I was hot or whether I was cold or whether I was in a book store or where I was, utterly vanished from my mind. I don't know that I have ever been more absolutely and unquestionably aware of genius in my life. I read that superb and unforgettable picture that Lindsay gives of that troop of hoodlums and harlots, in their rags and wounds and sores and miseries, campaigning up to the golden city of redemption, with their bass drums and tambourines and banjos and red-and-blue flags and their Salvation Army ritual, with the blind man, Booth, at their head, storming the golden gates and in a flash transformed into radiant spirits with robes of purity and fire. It is a simple, melodramatic picture, but how he conveyed it; what passion and what fury and what tenderness and what indescribable gusto and zest of life there is in the thing! And that was characteristic of Vachel through his whole career. Like the hero of one of his own most charming poems, he was the broncho that would not be broken of dancing. Many of you undoubtedly have heard him and seen him. Outwardly, as you know, there was nothing of the traditional poet about him. Particularly in the days when I first knew him, when he still had a Middle-Western haircut, as sharp as a line in pen and ink around the back of his neck where the hair had been

shaved. You remember his extraordinary, shrill twang, rather like one of Cromwell's Roundhead Grenadiers, and his evangelizing fervor, his large screams of laughter, his passionate hobby of taking naps on every possible occasion—he lived at such high tension that he would go on until there was no more energy in him, and then suddenly collapse and lie either prone or supine for as long as possible. You remember his curious way of wrinkling up his eyes and when he got excited of rolling his eyeballs until nothing was visible except the whites, and he looked almost like a locoed pony with his tawny hair and his white eyeballs showing. The only real likeness of Vachel I have ever seen, incidentally, is those lions in front of the Public Library in New York—that curious backward tilt of the head and tawny mane and the eyes screwed up. Every time I pass one of those lions I almost expect to hear it begin to recite "The Congo."

An extraordinary person, but so full of life, so full of genuineness, such a clean and wholesome mind, and yet with such extraordinary subtleness at the back of it. One of the men we could least afford to spare, and certainly one I had thought would have been with us for many, many years to come.

I remember meeting him one time at Broad Street Station here in Philadelphia. He had come in on the sleeper from the West, and I suppose

like most passengers in a sleeper, he hadn't slept much, and when I came to meet him by appointment at Broad Street Station, about eight o'clock in the morning, there he was, sitting sound asleep on one of the benches in the waiting room, quite neat and composed, with his little bag beside him, his comb in his waistcoat pocket. Vachel was always ready to go off on the road at a moment's notice, with a little sheaf of manuscripts, including poems he happened to be working on at that time, and his comb in his pocket, because he enjoyed combing that long, tawny hair of his; he was ready for anything. There he was, with his little briefcase, his comb in his pocket, and his arms folded, his eyes shut and his head tilted back as usual, sound asleep on the bench in Broad Street Station. I woke him up. This was just after the end of the war, and Mr. Wanamaker was still conducting patriotic matins. Like all department-store owners and great capitalists, Mr. Wanamaker let the war go with reluctance, and they prolonged it as long as they could, they kept on playing "The Star-Spangled Banner." Philadelphia, you know, theoretically a pacific city, is really one of the most militaristic in the world. I have never seen anyone enjoy the war the way Philadelphia did. I know you think that is just being sardonic, but it is true. If you looked back now, and read those Wana-

maker editorials on patriotism, you would be surprised.

Well, that is irrelevant. But they kept on playing "The Star-Spangled Banner" on that very fine organ in the Wanamaker Store for a very long time, and at that time, in February, 1919, they were still playing it every morning to start the day. And I have never forgotten how I took Vachel in there and we joined in the singing. Anything that was a communal utterance of any kind, Vachel couldn't keep himself out of—he had to have a voice in it—and as we went down Chestnut Street, he heard something going on in Wanamaker's, and he asked, "What is it?" I said, "That is Mr. Wanamaker, beginning the day with a little patriotism." "Fine," he said. So we got in just as "The Star-Spangled Banner" was reaching that famous high note. Vachel, undeterred by any sense of sobriety or anything else, plunged right in and hit that high note, from scratch, in a way that staggered everyone. Even the organist turned around and looked down to see what was going on.

And do you remember the battle-flags Mr. Wanamaker used to have there? Another interesting essay for an ironical bibliographer would be the attitude of big department stores toward wars. But you will find that all thought out and much more beautifully and temperately put than I would ever put it, by Montague.

I want to close, keeping my mind on Vachel, by reminding you of one of his poems that is comparatively unfamiliar. He resented very much being called "The Jazz Poet" and "The Tramp Poet." Certainly, in spite of his magnificent vitality and his lovely sense of fun, his sense of gaiety, there was no one who had less of what we technically think of as jazz. There was no one less jazzy than Vachel in his heart. He was a man of tremendously ebullient temperament and a man of very great and simple pieties and charms. And when I hear him referred to as a jazz poet, as a number of editorials have just within the last two or three days since his death, I remember this poem:

Why do I curse the jazz of this hotel?

I like the slower tomtoms of the sea,

I like the slower tomtoms of the thunder,

I like the more deliberate dancing key
Of outdoor love, of outdoor talk and wonder.

I like the slower, deeper violin
Of the wind across the field of Indian corn,

I like the far more ancient violincello
Of whittling lovers telling stories mellow

Down at the village grocery in the sun;
I like the slower bells that ring
For church across the Indiana landscape old.
Therefore I curse the jazz of this hotel

That seems so hot but is so hard and cold.

The one thing that we will always think of in connection with Vachel Lindsay was his youthful and boyish spirit. He was fifty-two when he died, and yet he was nothing more than a boy. He was poetry as we like to think of poetry—the living spirit of youth and of the human heart opening itself to the winds and sunlight and starlight of every night and every day, and crying back man's joy and man's exultation, man's defiance or man's humility to these things which are so much greater than we. I remember a very lovely poem of his about youth, speaking of the youngest generation, to whom he had recited so many hundreds of times. He cried out, addressing youth and speaking about youth:

This is a chosen people, this is a separate race
speaking an alien tongue
These are the darlings of my heart, these are the
young.

Wine That Was Spilt in Haste

THERE WERE TWO SYMBOLIC anecdotes I wanted to use this afternoon, and not having been able to decide which was the more appropriate, I shall tell both.

In the first, I remember when Robinson Crusoe had cut down the enormous cedar tree and with labor and pain shaped it into the form of a rough canoe, he then discovered that he had cut it down one hundred yards away from the water and couldn't possibly get it down to the creek. He narrates that episode in his usual charming fashion, and I have felt rather like that in regard to these talks. Thinking about them beforehand, I prepared a great deal of intellectual kindling wood, very little of which has been necessary to compose the small and fragile raft on which we have put to sea these five afternoons. I suppose, however, it will always be that way in the case of any unfortunate public soliloquizer. The things he most wanted to ap-

proach, he never quite got around to. Perhaps life is like that.

And the second anecdote was one told of a well-known newspaper man who prized very greatly five hairs that had once belonged to Mark Twain; I mean they once grew on Mark Twain. This gentleman used to go to the barber at the Brevoort Hotel in New York. Mark Twain had lived very near the Brevoort, and the barber there who cut Mark Twain's beautiful white hair had saved a good many clippings; he gave the journalist, as a token of his esteem, five of these beautiful white bristles, and this man carried them around in the back of his watch and cherished them very greatly. In a moment of generous impulse he had given away two of them, but he still had three.

At the time of the imbroglio with Mexico in 1916, the reporter was sent to Vera Cruz as a war correspondent, and sitting in a Mexican tavern one night talking over this and that with another man, they had several drinks of very strong native Mexican wine; they became sentimental and frank, as men do under those conditions, and were telling each other of the great things that had happened. Finally the owner of the precious hairs took out his watch and opened it and said, "I'll bet you don't know what those are. Those are three of Mark Twain's hairs." And the other man was also a great Mark Twain enthusiast and of course he

was thrilled and moved, and he said, "Wouldn't you give me one of them as a souvenir?" Well, they argued about it to and fro. The owner of the hairs admitted that he had given away two, and theoretically there was no reason why he shouldn't give still another. "But," he said, "three strands of hair, that seems to make a complete souvenir in itself. Now, if I give you one, there will only be two, and somehow that seems rather meager as a keepsake." I think probably in the long run the correspondent, being a generous man, would have been persuaded to give away one of those three precious relics, but as they were arguing with these hairs carefully laid on a plate in front of them on the table, in came a big, breezy friend of theirs, a Richard Harding Davis sort of chap, who saw them sitting at the table, the wine glasses mostly empty, their heads bent over and talking very earnestly. This friend coming up in his gringo free-and-easy fashion, said, "Hello! What are you fellows doing?" And seeing these three hairs on the plate he bent over and let loose a blast of breath and the hairs flew away on the sawdust floor and were never again found.

And that story, though I have it only by hearsay, seemed to me symbolic of the fragile and impermanent nature of most literary reminiscences. They may be of deep sentimental significance, but a gust of wind can blow them beyond recovery.

Speaking of a group of salt-water writers who have meant much to me, I alluded, but rather too casually, to H. M. Tomlinson. I spoke of Tomlinson in conjunction with Montague. They were great friends but very different. Montague, as we remarked, was a man of athletic instinct and of great physical energy. Tomlinson is more the brooder and dreamer, although his wanderings have carried him farther afield than the athletic Montague ever went. You undoubtedly are familiar with his first and perhaps most famous book, *The Sea and the Jungle*, describing his adventures up the Amazon; and on the other side of the world he has been as far as Malaya. We were speaking of Montague and Tomlinson at the time their friendship began at that old château at Rollancourt, which was one of the press headquarters in France during the war, and I like to think how very different was another French château ten years later where I saw something of Tomlinson himself. I can't refrain from alluding to that beautiful little mansion in Burgundy because it belonged to a Philadelphia architect, a man well known in this city and very dear to many of us, the late Hawley McLanahan. At that exquisite summer home of his at Missery, a small château in the Côte d'Or region of middle southern France it was his delight occasionally to welcome artists and imaginers like Tomlinson. Missery, we used to say, loves company; a bad

pun, but he enjoyed it. And I remember Tomlinson saying of the lovely quality of life as lived in that house, that Missery had given him cross bearings. Cross bearings, as you know, is a nautical phrase, implying locating one's position. He dedicated one of his books to the château.

The first time I ever met Tomlinson, he said something that I have not forgotten. It was in the washroom of the Caledonian Club in London, where we were both guests, and we happened to be washing our hands at adjoining basins. I suppose a fanciful person might imagine that by that very humble act of purification, one might for a few moments wash away the dust and soot of daily jargon and cant and interchange for a moment clean, immaculate idea. At any rate, I have never forgotten Tomlinson looking up from his wash basin with his peculiar Buddha-like directness of gaze and saying, "Why do your American critics complain all the time that you do not have any literature?" (This was in 1924, when our leading critics were even more querulous than they are at the moment.) "Why," he said, "you have had Whitman and Melville and Hawthorne and Thoreau and Emily Dickinson. Isn't that enough for seventy-five years or so? How much do you expect?" And that reminds me also that Tomlinson himself is proud to claim that he got his first literary impulse from Thoreau. In many reviews and critiques

of Tomlinson's work, you will find him compared to Conrad, but I see no necessity for that parallel. His very cadence and method, the peculiarly somber and melancholy music of his prose, is almost a reminiscence of Thoreau's own manner, and Tomlinson himself admits that he is steeped in Thoreau.

My first acquaintance with Tomlinson's writings was in his book called *Old Junk*, which I found lying around the office of the New York *Evening Post* when I first went to work there. I knew nothing of Tomlinson and nothing of the book except that the title, *Old Junk*, appealed to me; I have never forgotten the thrill, almost the shock of delight, with which I read paragraphs at random. The peculiarly enchanting music of his work reminds one of those faint blue curves and loops and twirls marking the elevations on a contour map. That figure always occurred to my mind in reading Tomlinson's prose, because there seems to be a subtle contrapuntal pattern woven through it. An extraordinary clearness and kindness and freshness of feeling.

Another personality I can only allude to very briefly is an American writer as different from most professional authors as can be imagined, Felix Riesenbergr. I mention him particularly for one reason, that he had an experience early in life which I think has marked his whole thinking career, and one which few of us can hope to duplicate ex-

cept in imagination. Riesenbergr, as a young man, I think it was about 1908, served as the navigator of Walter Wellman's airship which made the first attempt to reach the North Pole by air, in a dirigible balloon. They were wrecked in Spitzbergen and Riesenbergr was left in command of the outfit while most of them returned in a convoy ship to civilization. Riesenbergr and three or four others were left in a portable hut which they erected in the snow crags of Spitzbergen, and there they spent the entire Arctic night of several months. They had plenty to eat and plenty to smoke and nothing to read except an old copy of the New York *World*. One of their amusements was to try to memorize that copy of the newspaper. They had competitions among themselves in trying to repeat it from end to end, advertisements, editorials, news articles and everything else. Probably the New York *World* was never so carefully studied before or since. I don't know whether any of them became letter perfect from alpha to omega, but at any rate that was their sole intellectual fodder. Another amusement was devising different ways of cooking beans. They had brought along a tremendous number of beans and they invented a method of preparing them which they called Spitzbergen Beans. To this day if you give Captain Riesenbergr a chance he will serve you Spitzbergen Beans, and they are very good.

Those months which Riesenbergr spent in that way with the sparkling Arctic sky overhead and no civilization nearer than (I don't dare be too accurate geographically) I suppose 1500 or 2000 miles, gave him a sense of perspective that very few writers are likely to have. It developed or encouraged a natural seed of grotesque humor and extraordinary imagination which is very marked in his books. Riesenbergr's work is too little known among literary students, yet I know at least one thoughtful critic who regards his book *Endless River* as being as important intellectually as James Joyce and T. S. Eliot. This very much astounded Riesenbergr, who is not a man of intellectual type at all, but I just mention that as a casual comment. It is a very extraordinary book. I don't know of any work of fiction that has ever been written quite in the way that Riesenbergr wrote *Endless River*.

To conclude the matter of salt-water writers, I felt in first discovering, only a few months ago, a book called *S. S. San Pedro* by James Gould Cozzens, the same kind of pleasure and excitement that I had had in first reading Conrad. I am not saying anything so silly as implying that the power of one artist is equal to the power of the other artist. Comparisons of that sort are unmannerly and meaningless. But I do say that the quality of the pleasure experienced in reading Mr. Cozzens'

book was the same quality of pleasure that I had in first reading Conrad.

The only kind of collecting and bibliography that seriously interests me is that of attempting to discover and recognize the things that are worth while before they are universally acclaimed. Certainly it is always worth while to recognize great work, but the most delicious refinement and egotism of the passion must be that of saluting a thing before it is generally received.

I have thought several times that perhaps these talks of ours should be dedicated to two very great persons whom I have never seen praised in any literary history. They can't be accurately praised because no one knows who they were. Their initials were J. S. and R. B., and in October, 1818, they wrote to the London *Morning Chronicle*,* protesting against the treatment given in the *Quarterly Review* to a young English poet who was then publishing. They wrote that while they didn't claim to know anything about literature, they were sure that this young poet would sooner or later do something that the world would be glad to listen to. J. S. and R. B.—no one knows who they were, but you will find their letters in the London *Morning Chronicle* in the first week of October, 1818—the first general readers, the first gentle readers, who ever saluted the poet John Keats. And I have

* See M. B. Forman, *The Letters of John Keats*, I, 240.

dedicated our little book to them, for perhaps they deserve it as much as anyone else.

We were saying a word about Vachel Lindsay. We spoke of that famous book *The Lyric Year* as marking a white stone in the year 1912, and we spoke of Lindsay and Edna Millay (there were also many others we might have mentioned), as young poets whose work was first publicly announced in that book and who were representative of a new American poetry. Lindsay, on account of his extraordinary energy and evangelizing gusto which regarded poetry as something actually a spiritual legal tender which might justly be exchanged for roof and fire and food; and Edna Millay for her bittersweet dexterity in traditional measures. That suggests to me another feature in our very real literary renaissance of the last fifteen years—the personal bookshop. Frank Shay, who ran a little bookshop at Number 4 Christopher Street in Greenwich Village in New York, is suggested to me by Miss Millay's work because the collector of Miss Millay or of Eugene O'Neill and of a number of other excellent writers such as our Philadelphian, Pearsall Smith, may have a delightful time in trying to find some surreptitious editions of their early books, books which were published by Frank Shay at his bookshop on Christopher Street. It was too personal, too enchanting, too Bohemian a bookshop to survive indefinitely, but for five or six

years it played a very real part in the creative life of New York. In William McFee's forthcoming novel *The Harbourmaster*, you will find an enchantingly humorous, perhaps a little malicious description of Frank Shay's bookshop. In the first place, the bookshop was dear to many because it was in the room which had originally been the back room of the saloon where John Masefield worked. And let me add parenthetically that it is wrong to speak of John Masefield as having been a bartender. He never rose as high as that. The job of bartender is one that requires experience, great dexterity, and extraordinary tact, and Mr. Masefield, who was then only a lad, never rose higher than the job of bus boy. He polished the bright work, in fact did very much in that bar-room what he had done at sea. He polished and cleaned and did the odd jobs. And in the back room of that saloon was later established, long after the saloon had vanished, but in the same quarters, this bookshop of Frank Shay's. And Mr. McFee, somewhat humorously I admit, describes in the words of the narrator of his new novel, how a visitor comes into the bookshop and sees a transparent or semi-transparent screen in a doorway. The guileless bookseller hadn't realized that a light shining in his little cubicle at the back shone through this cloth screen and offered to the casual customer a silhouette of whatever the bookseller

might be doing behind it. Mr. McFee describes in this novel a silhouette that many of us remember having shared—the sentimental bookseller recuperating himself in a moment of such depression as must frequently visit a literary bookseller, by presenting to the world an unconscious shadow profile of a man with his head thrown back and one arm raised toward his lips.

I mention that not merely to be jocular but because it led to a very singular literary item. When the bookseller discovered that secret refreshment behind that screen was visible in silhouette to his customers, he had a real wooden door put in and when the door was hung in the doorway by the carpenter, before it had even had time to be varnished or painted, Hendrik Van Loon happened into the shop, and had a nice new pencil with him. You know Mr. Van Loon's delightful offhand drawings—he saw this door with its new, fresh, sweet-smelling wood, and he had this pencil. He did a little sketch on the door, and this suggested to the ingenious bookseller to turn his door into an autograph album. So for several years, almost all his writing and artistic customers were asked to put their names on the door, and in the course of two or three years it became entirely covered on both sides. Mr. Shay then had it varnished and pointed to it with much pride; it was indeed a very interesting sort of Magna Carta of all the writers of

that time, 1920 to 1926, or something like that. The sequel, however, was disconcerting. The bookshop failed, as so many personal and literary bookshops do—it passed into other hands and finally the sheriff came in and the stock was all commandeered for the benefit of the creditors. The young woman who was then running the bookshop found herself in the dusk and rearward of a heart-rending day alone in the shop which had been stripped of all its assets, and nothing was left but this autographed door. To the sheriff, of course it represented only so much scribbling, but to her it was very precious indeed, and she wondered how she could get it home. So never say that chivalry has perished in Greenwich Village, because as this fragile young woman was struggling with the door, trying to take it down, two men of letters came along and saw her wrestling with it. They couldn't imagine what she was doing. Here was this damsel backing out of the doorway with this enigmatic object entirely overshadowing her. And the two men of letters sprang to her rescue. One took one end of the door and one the other, and they carried it like a stretcher with the happy bookseller trotting merrily beside them; carried it over to Washington Square, to her apartment, where for all I know it still is.

It is dangerous to embark on anecdote of that sort because it might be endless, and severe critics

would say that it leads us nowhere. But I do hope that you divine between the lines, or between the halting syllables, what I have hungered to convey, and that is the human reality of literary creation; that men of letters, whether great or small, are not orderly, perfected machinery; they are not like those beautiful instruments you see on the wall where you push a button and out comes a shining white Lily Cup. Writers and artists are not like that. They are disorderly and perplexed, and perhaps sometimes their work is the better for that. And I think that truth, so often forgotten by severe commentators on literature, should encourage us all.

Another poet whom I must mention because I admire him so greatly was also represented in *The Lyric Year* of 1912. I remember very well coming in a train from New England to New York in September 1913, in a very much agitated state of mind, because I was coming to New York to look for my first job. And although people tell me it is hard to find a job now, it seemed just as hard in September 1913, as far as I can remember. I remember picking up a copy of a magazine, I think it was the *Atlantic Monthly*, and looking through it. My eye was brightly fixed on the publishing business, and I remember looking at all the publishers' advertisements. For some unknown reason the title of a book of poems then just published flashed out at me—*Merchants from Cathay*, by

William Rose Benét—and I remember thinking to myself, “I wonder if I will ever get to the point where I can publish a book?” And I sometimes think secretly how startled and staggered I would have been if some genie could have popped out of a brass bottle and told me that that man, William Rose Benét, whose name I saw and adored in a magazine—I didn’t know anything about him except I was fascinated in the first place by the fact that he had an accent in his name, for any writer with an accent in his name, particularly a circumflex accent, has always seemed to me exceptionally lucky. I remember when I read some of Abbé Brantôme’s work, I thought because he was an Abbé and had a circumflex accent that he would be a very improving writer. When I discovered the nature of the gallant histories of the Abbé Brantôme I was considerably taken aback.

At any rate, William Rose Benét, partly on account of his acute accent on the “e” and partly because he had published a book with that charming title, *Merchants from Cathay*, that name shone for me like a little group of stars over the horizon, and it would have staggered me, I say, if anyone could have told me that that man would become one of my best friends and that we would work together side by side in the same office for many years. I hadn’t realized in September 1913, that even a poet is a human being, not at all dissimilar

to other human beings. I thought of poets as remote constellations.

I got a letter the other day from Don Marquis, a great friend of Benét's. Don Marquis to me is one of our most considerable philosophic figures, a man who at his best is of Rabelaisian and Mark Twain blood, a man who at his wittiest ranks with the old French epigrammatists. I had a letter the other day from Mr. Marquis in which he was speaking of Benét and his work. "I am glad you referred to him," he said, writing to me, "I am glad you referred to him as a great poet, because that is what I also think, and I wish he might have some of that recognition while he is alive to garner it. I don't think," Don says very characteristically, "I don't think anything is ever quite the same to us after we are dead."

I haven't forgotten that we are thinking in an oblique way about collecting and bibliography, and for that reason also Benét's *Merchants from Cathay* is curious. It is probably the worst-printed volume of poems that any distinguished poet ever brought out. Benét was then working on the staff of the *Century Magazine*. He had written enough poems to make a very beautiful book, and the Century Company said they couldn't afford to publish it, but they would be proud to put their imprint on it if he would get someone else to undertake the cost of the plates. Benét's brother-in-law, Charles

Norris, who has since become a very well-known novelist, was at that time the business manager of a religious paper called *The Christian Herald*. Norris very generously volunteered to have Benét's poems set up at his own expense. He had them set up in the composing room of the *Christian Herald*, and probably the Christian compositor never had seen any lyric poetry before, for he set up these poems as though they were Sunday-school editorials. They were set up in a continuous string. Instead of putting one poem on a page, ending the page there, they were set up continuously from end to end of the book so that some of Benét's most beautiful poems begin two lines from the bottom of the page. It is one of the quaintest bits of typography that anyone will ever see. So this book, which I had seen advertised in 1913, was published in this grotesque printing and typography, but with the imprint of the Century Company on the title page. I don't know that I have ever seen that book listed in any catalogue of rare books as a bibliographical treasure, but to me it is one of the things I am most proud to own in the poetry of our time.

Another interesting first edition that perhaps should be mentioned is the first American edition of Rupert Brooke's poems. In the spring of 1915 I happened to see in an issue of the London *Times* an abstract of a sermon that had been delivered on Easter Sunday by the Dean of St. Paul's Cathedral;

in the course of that sermon he had quoted a sonnet by Rupert Brooke, one of the famous 1914 sonnets which at that time had not yet been published in book form. I was so thrilled by the thing that I wrote to Brooke, simply addressing it, "King's College, Cambridge," because I knew that was where he had studied. I wrote to ask if it would be possible to get hold of the American publishing rights of these noble sonnets. It was a long time before I heard, but presently came a letter from his executor, telling me that Brooke had died of sunstroke and blood poisoning, as you know, in the Mediterranean on the very day on which I had written.

I finally got hold of the proofs of the *1914 and Other Poems* by Brooke. I still have those sixty-four much-thumbed little page proofs, the first copy of Brooke's poems that ever came to this country. As a collector, I am very particular. Anything that is as ordinary as a first edition doesn't interest me very much. I like to go behind the first edition. I like books in their pre-natal state. And as was the case in *Disenchantment*, of which we spoke, every copy of Rupert Brooke's poems that has ever been printed in this country was born out of those sixty-four little page proofs which I have and which I naturally hold very dear.

I don't know whether it is being too personal to talk about things of that sort. One mustn't forget

that, as we used to say in the theatrical business, one man's Jersey City is another man's Hoboken. But since we mentioned William Rose Benét I must also allude to his younger brother, Stephen Vincent Benét, who is particularly well known for that magnificent Civil War poem or series of poems, *John Brown's Body*. I own the typed copy from which his superb "Invocation to the American Muse" was first put into print. I am equally proud of some very early examples of Stephen Benét's writing.

In the year 1919, a group of about ten young college men, mostly Yale men, got together. Some of them had been out of college a year or more, and others were just graduating. They formed a correspondence club to keep in touch with each other. And of that small group of men four or five have become very well known as writers. Stephen Vincent Benét was one. Thornton Wilder was another. Archibald MacLeish, often spoken of as one of the most important intellectual poets of our country, was another. John Farrar, who afterwards became a publisher himself, was another, and E. E. Cummings was an early contributor. I think that is a rather remarkable record for that casual group of ten boys. I mention this by memory only and probably omit other names that might well be added. The man who did the thankless job as editor was Norman Fitts.

They formed a correspondence club and exchanged letters among themselves which included also poems or scraps of essays and stories and vigorous manifestoes on the Future of Literature. This little budget of material which they sent around their circle was at first typewritten and afterwards printed on a proof press at the Yale University Press, where one of them was working. They didn't even have a name for their Club. They called their breviary "S₄N," which was merely a hieroglyphic for the phrase, "Suggestion for Name." They wanted very much to find a vigorous name for their group and were always writing to each other, "Have you got any S₄N?" meaning suggestion for name. But the symbol S₄N became the title of their journal, which afterwards was printed almost as a regular magazine with a circulation of several hundred. It went on for six or seven years. I have almost a complete file of it and I mention that because it is one of those fugitive items that booksellers are not likely even to know the existence of, and which can very easily disappear, and yet I think should some day be of value and interest to collectors.

Coming down in the train today, I was interested to see a rather condescending article in a New York newspaper about T. S. Eliot, an American poet who has lived abroad for many years and who has just, as you know, been invited back to

Harvard as Norton lecturer on poetry next year. It gave me a thrill of dismay to see again how readily newspapers blow off about things they know very little of. The New York journalist felt called upon to remark that Eliot was a poseur, an eccentric and an expatriate and all the other things which newspapers dislike. And I wondered by what right do hasty reporters and editorialists arrogate the privilege to comment on their intellectual betters. Don't let anybody tell you that T. S. Eliot is just a writer of contortionist prose, or obscurantist verse. He is a man of very great intellect, and a man of the most charming simplicity and affectionate nature. One of the most interesting things that has happened in any American university in the last few years in regard to contemporary literature is that Mr. Eliot has been invited to lecture at Harvard. I don't suppose there is any man living who knows more about English poetry than T. S. Eliot. And if a man chooses to live abroad, if a man chooses to become a British subject, if a man chooses to change his religion or to find in any form of intellectual or aesthetic or spiritual activity the symbols that he needs for his own consolation and joy, it is not the place of a hasty daily newspaper to toot off at him about it. I have been in newspapers enough myself to know how dangerous they are. A newspaper in its own function of recording facts and rumors is a

superb and magnificent thing, an engine of government. But it has little in common with literature, which lives in another universe.

I must mention another very important first edition. In 1916 the Oxford University Press issued for the first time a complete catalogue. To my way of thinking it is one of the most precious books in the world, an invaluable source book for any student of literature. I know a sea captain who keeps in his chartroom on his transatlantic liner (this is not Captain Bone but another captain, Captain Myddleton of the American Merchant Line) a copy of the General Catalogue of the Oxford University Press, to which he turns when he is coming on soundings or when he has a bad day in fog and needs for one moment to turn his mind to something which will give him relaxation and comfort. He is not a literary man, but a sea captain. And the intuitive reader will find in the Oxford University Press General Catalogue perhaps more suggestions of rewarding byways and of green shrubbery than in any other book I know about literature.

And I must add another footnote that one of the most valuable books I have ever had is Bartholomew's little *Handy Atlas of London and Suburbs*. It is farcical to read a novel about London (and more novels are written about London than any other town in the world) particularly novels that

are so topographical as Thackeray or Dickens or Gissing, without knowing the lay of the land, and in that magnificent little atlas you can really get an idea of how London streets run and where the different parts of the city are. That atlas and its companion, Bartholomew's *Atlas to the British Isles*, have been my most valuable textbooks in English literature. Suppose you are reading Hazlitt. Don't we all have a curiosity to know where Winterslow is? Suppose we are reading Charles Lamb and read something about Mackery End in Hertfordshire. Imagine my thrill in studying the *Atlas* when I saw Mackery End marked, the real place that Lamb visited in his childhood and so beautifully described. I got on my bicycle and went there. To read English literature, or any literature, without an atlas within reach is to waste half its potential glamour. I have said it, I know, before. But I will say again, an atlas is the best textbook of literature. It is just another phase of that thought that I tried humbly to remind you, that literature is a real, actual thing. Can you think of any character more presumably fanciful than Peter Pan? But did you know that Peter Pan is a real person, that he is a publisher in London? Peter Pan isn't an imagination; he is Barrie's godson, Peter Davies, and any book collector interested in beautiful books can go to Peter Davies' publishing shop in London and buy a book published by Peter Pan himself.

Peter Davies and his brother, Michael Davies, who was drowned at Oxford while an undergraduate, were the grandsons of Du Maurier, our old enchanter Du Maurier of *Trilby* and *Peter Ibbetson*. Their parents died when they were very young and Barrie, who had known and loved them, took these children and provided for their education. They were his godsons. He wrote *The Little White Bird* and then *Peter Pan* for them. For these were two real boys, Peter and Michael. Michael was the one who didn't live to grow up, but Peter Pan did grow up, and there in Covent Garden you will find him.

So in whatever direction you draw your radius, you find life coming up behind literature and indistinguishably mingled with it.

There is today* one other coincidence of date. We mentioned a coincidence of date in regard to Conrad's certificate as shipmaster. There is another that strikes me as appropriate, although it isn't exact. I spoke of the General Catalogue of the Oxford University Press. Perhaps we should say just a word about university presses in general. I am thinking particularly of your own University of Pennsylvania Press, which is young and ambitious. It was on the seventeenth of December—I am sorry it wasn't the sixteenth, but I must be accurate—it was on the seventeenth of Decem-

* December 16, 1931.

ber, 1468, that the Oxford University Press printed its first book. In the dating of that first book, the bibliographers tell us that Oxford made a mistake, the year should be 1478. They dropped out a Roman "X" from the title-page and so the Oxford Press began its career with a misprint. But there have been very few of them since, and it might be well to remind you, in a year of depression, that the Oxford University Press still offers one guinea for anybody who finds a typographical error in one of its Bibles. Of course I admit that now the guinea has gone off the gold standard that isn't quite as much as it was a year or so ago, but it is still, in a year like this, worth hunting for. Even if we don't find a misprint (and I have never found one in twenty years of search) we will learn a lot. .

The Oxford University Press, as I say, began with a misprint. It has now over a million pounds' weight of metal standing in type. It has over 550 fonts of type in 150 different characters. By characters, I mean kinds of writing—150 different alphabets. It is probably the greatest publishing venture in the world, as every scholar knows. And I say that with regret because all my ancestral connections are with its rival the Cambridge University Press. There are 150 alphabets standing in type at the Oxford Press. If you want to publish a book in Burmese, in Armenian, in Thibetan, in Egyptian Hieroglyphics, in Chinese, in Japanese,

Russian, in any of the Bengali dialects or in Greek, the Oxford University Press has those alphabets ready for you, and compositors who can set them and proofreaders who can read them. At the Oxford University Press a few years ago, at the time when they finished the great *New English Dictionary*, the greatest achievement of English-speaking scholarship in our lifetime, there was one compositor in their composing room who had worked for over forty years continuously on that one job of setting type for the *New English Dictionary*.

You remember the famous Dr. Fell, of whom it was said:

I do not love thee, Doctor Fell,
The reason why I cannot tell
But this alone I know full well
I do not love thee, Doctor Fell.

You may wonder why the students at Oxford did not like the masterful Dean of Christ Church and Bishop of Oxford. The reason was that he used to call daily at the room of every student and find out how he was getting along with his classics; therefore their protest. But Dr. Fell was the first great patron of the Oxford Press. For him the Fell type, still used, was named. It was he who founded the paper mill out at Wolvercote, just outside Oxford, where still, by secret process, the Oxford

India paper is made. Nobody outside the staff of the Oxford Press knows the formula for that paper.

It is a long way from the great Oxford Press to our young University of Pennsylvania Press. But with affection and hope for what the Pennsylvania Press may be, I want to call to its attention one little paragraph which I found in a history of the Oxford Press:

“No ideal machinery such as superintendence by a learned body like a university can ever successfully take the place of independence and personal enterprise. It was not machinery, but great men, that built up the press at Oxford.” We could have given, if we had time, more than an hour to talking just about the Oxford Press or about what the University of Pennsylvania Press may become. But I might very humbly offer one small suggestion, and it is this, that you keep an eye on the poetry of one of your own graduates who left here only a year or so ago.

I was riding in a subway train between the Pennsylvania Station and Times Square about a year ago, and I read in my own *Saturday Review* a poem by Edward Doro, “The Boar and Shibboleth,” a title that may prick curiosity but doesn’t mean much until you read the poem. And that poem, perhaps a column long, changed the whole day for me. When I went out on Forty-second Street, the shining armadillo spire of the

Chrysler Building looked newer and more beautiful; the day was a better day for that one poem that Edward Doro wrote. I wrote to Edward Doro, and found he was then a graduate student here in the city of Philadelphia. He is now abroad studying, and hopes to publish a volume of poetry when he can find a publisher. I happen to know he hasn't found a publisher yet because I have the manuscript of his book on my desk at the *Saturday Review*. But if the University of Pennsylvania Press is interested, I would be glad to send it to them. That is the kind of thing that you have got to keep your eye open for. There are lots and lots of young Keatses coming on.

I am going to conclude with one other epilogue. I happen to have seen a great deal about Petrarch in the papers lately, perhaps because there has been a new verse translation of Petrarch's sonnets. I remember one thing Professor Sir Walter Raleigh told us at Oxford that I have never forgotten, that in his will Petrarch said, "I leave fifty golden florins to my friend Don Giovanni for a winter gown for his evening studies." Petrarch's friend Don Giovanni was someone we all know—Boccaccio. And to his dear friend Boccaccio Petrarch left in his will fifty golden florins for a winter gown for his evening studies. "Surely little enough," he added, "for so great a man." And trying to think over what I could leave with you in the

nature of fifty golden florins for a winter gown to keep you warm at your evening studies, to shut out the cold winds of loneliness and perplexity that beset us all, I came to the conclusion that I could offer you only the humblest service, a service which I can't even expound to you in detail here. But I did take the trouble to think back over twenty years of mature reading and make up my mind, rightly or wrongly, as to the books and writers which had meant most to me. I have made out that list. I can't read you such a list, but in case any of you are interested, we will include it as an appendix in the little book that the University of Pennsylvania Press is going to utter. I only meant it to be a list of fifty writers or titles, but the list ran, I am sorry to say, to eighty-five, so I am more generous than Petrarch was. I leave you eighty-five golden florins.

I know you will be generous enough to realize that I don't suggest that those are the greatest writers in the world. I don't say they are universally important or that anybody should rush off and buy them. I simply offer them in all humility, not as a recommendation but as a confession. It is a partial list of the things that have given me the most pleasure, pleasure of all kinds.

And so we come back to those humble symbols that we found in the cardboard box—the copper wire for communication and the silver cork for

intoxication and ecstasy; the arrowhead for penetration, and the stained glass for mystification, and the little corkscrew for purification. We can find them all in our reading.

When I was at the University of Leyden, not as a student but as a tourist, I was very much struck by a phrase which by old Dutch custom the students write upon the wall of the classroom. Before I tell you what it is, I must give you one more quotation. In the first publication of the Rosenbach Fellowship in Bibliography, a scarce little book lately reprinted by the University of Pennsylvania Press and entitled *Proposals Relating to the Education of Youth in Pensilvania*, Benjamin Franklin, that frolicsome old humorist, gives a list of books that he thinks the students of his new school in Philadelphia should study carefully. He slips in, as was Benjamin's way—he was sometimes Moby Dick and sometimes Poor Richard—in his humorous Poor Richard mood, among the books that he wanted his students to study a volume called *Sanctorius on Perspiration*. I think the old humorist suggested that with some purpose in mind. Because if we are going to get anywhere as readers or bibliographers, we mustn't forget perspiration. And therefore I was pleased when I saw the scrawl which all the students at the University of Leyden in Holland put up on the wall when they finish an examination. They

write it up in chalk and after the examinations are over, I suppose the janitor goes around and brushes it off until the next examination, when they do it again. If the student thinks he has failed, he writes, *Hic sudavi sed frustra*—"Here I sweated but in vain." If he thinks he has passed the examination, he writes, *Hic sudavi et non frustra*—"Here I sweated and I hope not in vain."

More than twenty years ago, there was a young poet at the University of Minnesota, and afterwards an instructor there, who was drowned in one of those beautiful northern lakes. Twenty years after his death his own university at Minneapolis built a beautiful memorial for him. He was Arthur Upson, who wrote what I think I want to leave with you as the motto of the meaning of poetry and literature and books and all the realities behind them in our own lives. Remember, they are only an escape into print, they are only part of a larger reality behind, a reality of living in which exemplars of all kinds have their part and where the austere Matthew Arnold and the dissipated Boswell may be equal purveyors of truth. Arthur Upson wrote this:

Wine that was spilt in haste
Arising in fumes more precious,
Garlands that fell forgot
Rooting to wondrous bloom;

·(130)·

Youth that would flow to waste
Pausing in cool green valleys
And passion that lasted not
Surviving the voiceless tomb.

Golden Florins

Chaucer: Troilus and Cressida

Shakespeare: ad lib.

A. Conan Doyle: Complete Sherlock Holmes

Swift: Gulliver's Travels; Journal to Stella

Thackeray: The English Humorists

John Morley: Voltaire

O. Henry: ad lib.

Joseph Conrad: The Shadow Line; A Personal
Record; The Nigger of the Narcissus; Twixt
Land and Sea

Boswell: Life of Johnson

Robert Bridges: The Spirit of Man (an anthology)

W. H. Hudson: The Purple Land

Samuel Butler: The Way of All Flesh; Notebooks

Melville: Moby Dick

C. E. Montague: Disenchantment

Keats: Poems; Letters

William Blake: Poems

John Donne: Poems; Devotions; Letters

— Thomas Fuller: The Holy State and the Profane
State

R. L. Stevenson: ad lib.

Thomas Hardy: Poems

Bacon: Essays

- Lamb: Essays of Elia; Letters
Santayana: Little Essays; Character and Opinion
in the U. S.
—Vachel Lindsay: Poems
Virginia Woolf: The Common Reader
John Masefield: Poems
Havelock Ellis: The Dance of Life
—Sir William Osler: The Student Life
Elinor Wylie: Poems; The Venetian Glass Nephew
William Rose Benét: Man Possessed
Siegfried Sassoon: Memoirs of an Infantry Officer
Sterne: Sentimental Journey; Tristram Shandy
Fielding: Tom Jones
F. C. Burnand: Happy Thoughts
Hawthorne: The Scarlet Letter
Landor: Selections (Golden Treasury Series)
Katherine Mansfield: Bliss
Anatole France: Penguin Island; The Revolt of
the Angels
The Oxford Book of English Verse
The Book of Common Prayer
Benjamin Franklin: Autobiography
Thoreau: Walden
William Penn: Some Fruits of Solitude
A. Edward Newton: The Amenities of Book Col-
lecting
Du Maurier: Peter Ibbetson; Trilby
Stories by Saki (one-volume edition)
Kipling: The Jungle Book; Traffics and Discoveries

Aldous Huxley: *Leda*

— William McFee: *Casuals of the Sea*

Felix Riesenbergr: *Endless River*

Rupert Brooke: *Poems*

Edna St. Vincent Millay: *Poems*

John Aubrey: *Brief Lives*

— H. M. Tomlinson: *The Sea and the Jungle; Old
Junk; Out of Soundings*

Pepys: *Diary*

Walt Whitman: *Leaves of Grass; Complete Prose*

De Quincey: *The Opium Eater; The English Mail*

Coach; Reminiscences of the English Lake Poets

Hazlitt: *ad lib.*

Walter Pater: *Marius the Epicurean*

George Moore: *Confessions of a Young Man*

Van Wyck Brooks: *The Ordeal of Mark Twain*

The Heart of Emerson's Journals, edited by Bliss
Perry

Complete Catalogue of the Oxford University Press

Robert Cortes Holliday: *Walking Stick Papers;*

Broome Street Straws

Coleridge: *Biographia Literaria*

Wordsworth: *Poems*

Wilkie Collins: *The Moonstone; The Woman in
White*

Emily Brontë: *Wuthering Heights*

George Borrow: *Lavengro*

— George Gissing: *The Private Papers of Henry
Ryecroft*

Alexander Smith: Dreamthorp

L. Pearsall Smith: Trivia

Emily Dickinson: Poems

Edward Fitzgerald: Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam;
Euphranor

Hilaire Belloc: Hills and the Sea

E. V. Lucas: The Open Road (an anthology)

Matthew Arnold: Poems; Culture and Anarchy

Jane Austen: Persuasion

Sherwood Anderson: Winesburg, Ohio

— David W. Bone: The Brassbounder

Don Marquis: The Almost Perfect State

Max Beerbohm: Seven Men; And Even Now

W. Compton Leith: Sirenica

Walter de la Mare: Poems; Desert Islands

Sir Thomas Browne: Religio Medici

